

Bios of Council for Women Board members 2010-2011

Meena Ahuja

Ms. Ahuja earned her B.S. in Electrical Engineering in India and her MBA at Fayetteville State University. She is the Program Manager of the SBA-funded Women's Business Center in Fayetteville, offering technical assistance and access to capital for small businesses in North Carolina. She has designed a microloan program for the inexperienced and less qualified borrowers and has introduced a mentoring program for microenterprises.

Beth Briggs

Ms. Briggs is founder and President of Creative Philanthropy Consulting, Inc., in Raleigh, whose mission is to provide grant-making, administrative, strategic planning, emerging trends and issues identification, executive search, and counseling services for corporations, foundations, nonprofits and individuals seeking to maximize the impact of their philanthropy. She previously served as President of the N.C. Public Television Foundation, and is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill.

Minnie Forte-Brown

A Durham native, Ms. Forte-Brown serves as coordinator of speech communication, and is a master English and Communication teacher at N.C. Central University. She is a frequent presenter locally and statewide, receiving numerous awards for her teaching excellence and community service. She is a graduate of St. Augustine's college and earned a Master of Education in speech pathology and audiology at NCCU.

Robin Reid Coates

Currently serving as State Director of Human Resources Development of the N.C. Community College System, Ms. Coates previously worked at Randolph, Stanly, Fayetteville and Wayne Community Colleges. She provides leadership, oversight and training to 58 community college program directors. She holds a MA degree in Community Counseling from Campbell University.

Kate Deiter-Maradei

Currently a Senior Associate with Teague, Campbell, Dennis & Gorham, LLP law firm, Ms. Deiter-Maradei is a graduate of UNC School of Law. While a student at Penn State University, she studied abroad in Salamanca, Spain, is fluent in Spanish, and interned with Women Organized Against Rape. She volunteers with a variety of organizations in Raleigh including Helen Wright Center, the Food Bank, and the Salvation Army.

Ann J. Gerhardt

With 25 years of nonprofit organizational management, supervisory and program experience, Ms. Gerhardt is Executive Director of The Women's Center in Chapel Hill, serving women and girls in the Triangle region. Previously, she served as Director of Training and Education at the National Women's Health Association in Washington, D.C., and earned an MPH degree from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Valerie Ann Johnson

Dr. Johnson is the Vice-President of the Faculty Senate at Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, where she is the Mott Distinguished Professor of Women's Studies and Director of Africana Women's Studies. She earned her Ph.D. at the University of California-Berkeley, and serves on numerous boards including The Women's Table at Scarritt-Bennett Center, Our Children's Place, and Conservation Council of North Carolina. She also is an advisor to the White House Council on Women and Girls.

Meenal Khajuria

Currently a graduate student in Social Work focusing on Community Partnerships at N.C. State University, Ms. Khajuria previously earned an MA in Political Management at George Washington University, and most recently was a policy analyst for the N.C. League of Municipalities.

Julie Lapham

Dr. Lapham has worked for the past 25 years as a management consultant, primarily for nonprofits, including Common Cause Virginia, Smeal and Associates and NOW, both in Washington, D.C., and Allied Chemical Corp. and Singer Research Corp., both in New Jersey. Dr. Lapham has authored numerous publications, has earned patents on three products, and holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from The Union Institute in Cincinnati. She lives in Greensboro.

Jane Martin

As President of "Makin' It Work – Pronto!", Ms. Martin leads a management team of Hispanic professionals delivering a full range of strategic marketing, advertising and video based services to facilitate effective communications with Hispanic consumers. She has an MBA from Wake Forest University and serves on numerous boards.

Mary Peterson

Many years of nonprofit organizational and public policy work have prepared Ms. Peterson well for her role as Chair of the Council this year. She is a certified Medical Technologist with a Masters in Education from Lehigh University, and is a part-time instructor at Craven Community College in New Bern, where she lives.

Lisa Anne Piñeiro

An award-winning business owner, Ms. Piñeiro grew two construction-related businesses to multi-million dollar ventures before selling them and currently owns three businesses in the Triangle. She conducts seminars on topics ranging from entrepreneurial traits to "understanding and communicating like a man." She is the Founder of Women@Work, a nonprofit that educates and empowers young women toward nontraditional careers.

Muriel K. Offerman

As Assistant Chairman for Organizational Effectiveness at the Employment Security Commission, Ms. Offerman is responsible for implementation of the agency's strategic planning and internal audit. She began government service during Governor Hunt's

administration as Deputy Secretary, then Secretary of the Department of Revenue. She is active on the local, state and national level with numerous religious, community and civic organizations.

Melissa Reed

Providing leadership for all public affairs work of regional Planned Parenthood Health Systems (North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia), Ms. Reed guides pro-active efforts with public and elected officials on issues related to reproductive health and education. She previously served as Executive Director of NAARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina, and the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Morgantown, W.Va. She has an MA in Arts Administration and has recently enrolled in Law School at N.C. Central University.

Barbara E. Riley

As Managing Partner of Chambers Group, LLC, Dr. Riley brings extensive expertise to leadership development, executive and life coaching, organization culture change and diversity and inclusion. She is a published author and counts among her clients, Wachovia Corp, Corning Inc., Shell Oil, Kodak, S.C. Johnson Wax, Carolinas Health Care System and others. She completed her doctorate at Boston University. She currently serves as an advisor to Dress For Success, Women's Intercultural Exchange and other nonprofit organizations serving women in North Carolina.

Laura Kellison Wallace

For the past 10 years, Ms. Wallace has directed the Work/Life Center, Employee & Family Services at SAS Institute in Cary. She is responsible for the management, creation, supervision, coordination, implementation and evaluation of SAS work/life and EAP programs. Prior to joining SAS, she performed similar services for UNC-Chapel Hill's staff and faculty in its Human Resources Department. She earned a Master of Social Work degree from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Jennifer J. Ward

As Sustainability Engagement Manager at Duke Energy Corp. in Charlotte, Ms. Ward leads the efforts to integrate awareness, learning and the practice of sustainability as a new competency, strategic driver and source of innovation across business units. Previously she was Senior Vice President, Early Talent Strategy Manager and Brand Manager and Women's Market Leader at Wachovia Corp. She earned an MBA at Wake Forest University and is a member of several boards serving women and girls in North Carolina.