

## Greater Durham Black Chamber of Commerce Board Member Bios



**Larry C. Borders**  
**Board Chair**

Mr. Borders currently serves as the Board Chair for The Greater Durham Black Chamber of Commerce. A current real estate investor, stock investor, and an avid art collector, Larry has an extensive background in Project Management, where he has led large operations of bilateral mission transfer and significant system reallocation for internal and external global customers. Larry had a lengthy career with IBM where he held multiple leadership positions including Senior IT Project Manager for Global IT Development and managed resources in Mexico, Japan, India, China, UK, Brazil, Peru, Singapore, France, Scotland, and Egypt. Larry has also served as a Senior IT Consultant to many other corporations including the New York City Housing Authority and worked on assignments in Paris. He has been a Durham resident for over thirty years, is a U.S. Army Veteran and continues to have a passion for economic empowerment and community outreach. Larry has also chaired and vice-chaired the Durham County Democratic Party 39th Precinct for several years, representing almost 4,000 constituents.



**Dr. Vanessa Coble**  
**Board Vice Chair**

Dr. Coble is the President of Seniors Medical Supply, Inc., who is involved in the everyday practice of delivering medical equipment, services, and supplies to North and South Carolina residents. She was born and raised in Rocky Mount, North Carolina and graduated with a Ph.D., in Counseling Education from North Carolina State University in 2002. After working in the public-school sector and then the collegiate level of education, she decided in 2004 to open her own business and put to use all of her higher learning skills and education, thus the birth of Seniors Medical Supply, Inc. Today, the company serves more than 500 customers annually and is constantly growing. Seniors Medical Supply, Inc., was vetted by the world's largest and most prestigious organization in healthcare standards in 2006; The Joint Commission of HealthCare (JCAHO), and has maintained their healthcare standards every since. In addition to bearing the gold seal, Seniors Medical Supply, Inc., is a certified Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), Woman Owned Small Business (WOSB), Certified by American Board for Certifications, Prosthetics & Pedorthics, Inc., (ABC), and is certified by the Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB). Dr. Coble is an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, and currently resides in Burlington, North Carolina.



**Cheryl Hodge**  
**Treasurer, Finance Committee Chair**

Mrs. Hodge is an accounting professional with extensive experience in financial accounting. She currently serves as Manager of Cash Management and Payables for NC Mutual Life Insurance Company. In the non-profit sector, she manages the bookkeeping for The Religious Coalition for a Non-Violent Durham and assists with bookkeeping for White Oak Foundation, Inc. She holds a BBA in Accounting from NC Central University and is a Certified Treasury Professional.



**Merald Holloway**  
**Development Committee Chair**

Mr. Holloway is a passionate and dedicated advocate for economic empowerment and social justice within several North Carolina communities, with over 20 years of experience holding senior management roles staff development, community development, and diversity and inclusion practices, including 10 years directing internal support and external member services at Self-Help, a mission-oriented CDFI. Merald is the founder Managing Director of NC 100, a nonprofit in Rockingham County focused on workforce development and civic engagement. Dedicated to building and supporting minority ecosystems of business enterprise, he also serves as an advisory board member for the Business Administration department at Durham Technical Community College and was the advisory board chairman for the Career and Technical Education program for Durham Public Schools for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years.



**Esther Hicks**  
**Marketing Committee Chair**

Mrs. Hicks brings a unique eye to the GDBCC Board of Directors as the owner of Esther Hicks Photography. With a love for documentary photography, she beautifully chronicles our meetings, socials, and networking events. Born in St. Lucia, Esther has made North Carolina her home for more than 20 years.



**Thomas Whitehead**  
**Membership Committee Chair**

Mr. Whitehead is currently a Regional Bank Private Banker at Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. In his role, he specifically assists high net-worth individuals and small business owners in developing financial plans that address their long-term saving goals, credit needs, and other wealth management issues. Thomas also serves as an active member on Wells Fargo's Triangle Diversity and Inclusion Council, a tutor for Union Baptist Church ACE Tutoring Program, and a member of the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church finance committee. He is a graduate of North Carolina State University with a Bachelor's of Science in Business Management – Finance Concentration. Additionally, he currently holds FINRA Series 7, 63, and 65 and North Carolina Life Insurance licenses.



**Dr. Anthony Witherspoon**  
**Programming Committee Chair**

Dr. Anthony Witherspoon graduated from Sherman College of Chiropractic, located in Spartanburg, SC with his Doctorate of Chiropractic degree in 2010. After graduating, Dr. Witherspoon has practiced in Mississippi, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina, treating a variety of patients and ailments. He has also done this in a variety of settings, ranging from family practice to pain management. Dr. Witherspoon relocated to the Triangle area in September 2016 with his family in an effort to fulfill ambitions of opening a wellness practice catering to a vast, diverse community. Since relocating, Dr. Witherspoon has served as an adjunct professor at multiple colleges and universities in the area, Allied Health Program Director at Miller-Motte College in Cary, NC, and associate chiropractor at various clinics. He has the pleasure of guiding and motivating students into healthcare careers and navigating patients through their journeys to a healthy lifestyle. In 2018, Dr. Witherspoon and his wife, Shavahn, established Integrate Health and Wellness, PLLC. Their mission is to serve the surrounding community with exceptional service through holistic healthcare that focuses on natural wellness.



**Keelan Brown**  
**Membership Committee**

Mr. Brown is a Principal of The Brown Consulting Team, LLC, providing business consultation and coaching services to eager first time entrepreneurs and existing business owners. A Senior IT Project Manager with more than 18 years of experience in Corporate America, Keelan has held leadership positions during his 16 year tenure at IBM and currently manages the Application Support for the Corporate Benefit Funding portfolio at MetLife, Inc. Keelan is a proud North Carolina Central University graduate, where he earned his Bachelor of Business Administration degree with a concentration in Computer Information Systems. He is a professional member of the Phi Beta Lambda Business Fraternity, Inc.



**Ashley D. Gilmore**  
**Membership Committee**

Mrs. Gilmore is a Nationally Board-Certified Counselor and a Licensed Professional Counselor-Associate for the State of North Carolina. She has earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Law & Society from Purdue University, a Master's of Science in Counseling/Counselor Education from Indiana University and a Master's of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy from Capella University.

Ashley is an Outpatient therapist at Structured Family Intervention, LLC, where she works with homeless families in Durham. Additionally, Ashley works with couples and families in her community and church to empower effective communication in all areas of a relationship including finances, in-laws, children, sexual intimacy as well as trauma within the Black family. Throughout her professional career, Ashley has worked in higher education settings in event planning and with programs that focus on youth development and formation. She is a member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. and Delta Kappa Marriage and Family International Honor Society. Ashley is married and the proud parent of two daughters.



**Jelyse Dawson**  
**Programming Committee**

Jelyse Dawson is the Founder of Fusion Fitness by Jelyse LLC, a social enterprise helping people to stress less and move more! Since 2015, she has launched wellness programs for employees, active adults, medical patients, and youth. As an undergrad, Dawson taught fitness to athletes and faculty at Grambling State University. Today, she leads a diverse team of instructors delivering virtual well-being to underserved populations. Dawson's corporate experience includes serving in global marketing, data analytics, diversity recruiting, and human resources, with companies like John Deere, Burt's Bees, and Cisco Systems. Her passion for closing disparities among youth is evident in her work with her family's non-profit organization, Train Them Up for Success CDC, and as a youth leader with the Gems of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated. Her social impact outreach during COVID-19 was co-directing the Girls Fit to Soar Camp exposing girls around the country to careers, college prep, and fitness. She holds an MBA from NC State University and a BS in Business Management from Grambling State University. Jelyse is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., League of Women Voters, New Leaders Council, and wellness coordinator for Train Them Up for Success CDC. She also is a brand marketing practitioner for small



**Princessa Palmer**  
**Development Committee**

Princessa Palmer follows the deep-seated Merrill Lynch tradition of participating in the communities they serve and brings a diverse set of financial insights to the GDBCC Board. At Merrill Lynch/Bank of America and beyond, Princessa aims to positively affect the lives of the people she meets. When not working or volunteering in the community, Princessa enjoys dancing, advocating for the homeless, and being a mom to her four sons.



**Jasmine Brown**  
**Finance Committee**

Ms. Brown is ecstatic to be a member of the Finance committee for the Greater Durham Black Chamber of Commerce. Jasmine is the founder and director of FACTS for Youth, a local nonprofit educating high school students on financial literacy. FACTS for Youth's goal is to help teens become financially empowered and successful in all other aspects. Jasmine graduated from North Carolina State University with a B.S. in business administration with a concentration in finance and a minor in accounting. She is an entrepreneur, swim coach, and role model. Jasmine enjoys football, vegan food, trying new foods, volunteering, and traveling.



**Travis Tracey**  
**Finance Committee**

Mr. Tracy is a Certified Financial Planner™ and Enrolled Agent with seven years of experience in the financial services industry. He is the Founder of Fortitude Financial Planning, a fee-only comprehensive financial planning firm specializing in helping young professionals, families, and entrepreneurs live the lives they want to live. Travis is originally from Spartanburg, SC, but made his way to NC to attend Guilford College in Greensboro, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. Travis resides in Durham with his wife, Shelby, his daughter, Peyton, and their two dogs, Savannah & Bailey. Outside of work, Travis enjoys spending time with his family, doing outdoor activities, and watching sports.



**Ann Verdine-Jones**  
**Programming Committee**

Ann Verdine-Jones is a Human Resources Professional with more than 20 years of experience. She has been consulting and providing HR solutions in such areas as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Training and Development, Employee Relations and Talent Acquisition. She has had several leadership HR roles in varying industries to include non-profit, state government, and professional service organizations. Ann is a strategic business partner and has worked alongside C-Suite executives creating an engaging, collaborative and inclusive workforce. She earned an MBA from Western Governors University and is a doctoral candidate at Capella University pursuing a DBA with a concentration in Human Resources. She is also a member of the Society for Human Resource Management (both national and local). Ann is both a volunteer and member of the Board of Directors with StepUp Durham. Ann resides in the Triangle (NC) with her wife (Lisa) and their two pets, Coco and Nala. Outside of work, Ann is very active in her congregation (Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship) and engaging as an advocate in LGBTQIA initiatives. She enjoys reading all genres, traveling internationally, and spending time with family, both near and far.