

The Board of the North Carolina Recreation & Parks Scholarship Foundation



Mary Henderson-Chair

Mary is the retired Director of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources for Cary. She currently works part-time as a Senior Consultant for WithersRavenel. She serves on the Board of Directors for NC Senior Games, The Miracle League of the Triangle and the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau. Mary volunteers for the USTA serving as the National Public Parks Committee Chair.



Tim Aydlett

Tim is a retired principal from Elizabeth City and a former member of the NC Parks & Recreation Authority. He is also a board member of NC Audubon, NC Beautiful, Friends of Dismal Swamp State Park, DISW PAC chairman and President of Baptist Men at Corinth Baptist Church. His hobbies are hunting, fishing, flying, remodeling and photography. Tim is a 2006 recipient of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine.



Cobie Ellington

Cobie is a graduate from NCSU in Recreation Resource Management and has worked in the field of recreation for 36+ years. Cobie currently works with Superior Recreation of the Carolinas serving the central part of NC. She designs and sells playgrounds, site amenities, bleachers, shade and shelters. She is married to Larry Ellington and has one son Pat Bowles who works for Huntersville Parks and Recreation. Cobie enjoys playing outside but is partial to horseback riding and loves to camp and ride her horse all over the Carolinas and Virginia.



Kathy Hamilton Gore

Kathy is a Teaching Associate Professor at NCSU, where she has been for 23 years. Being active in NRPA and NCRPA over the years she is the 2015 recipient of the Ernest T. Attwell Award for lifetime achievement and service to young professionals. Her research areas are human diversity issues and recreation program planning. She has also presented numerous professional development sessions at state and national conferences and has facilitated staff training for many park & recreation departments nationwide.

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Joy James Ph.D.

Dr. James currently serves as Associate Professor of Recreation Management at Appalachian State University where she has been involved in teaching parks and environmental education for over twenty years. She obtained a Recreation Resource Management undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia, Outdoor Education/Curriculum & Instruction Masters from Northern Illinois University and Parks & Protected Areas from Clemson University. As a life-long learner, Joy has a passion for getting everyone outside enjoying natural areas and parks!



Mack McLeod

Mack currently serves as Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Hickory. He is a 1981 graduate of North Carolina State University with a B.S. degree in Recreation Resources Administration. He began his professional career in January of 1982 as an Assistant Recreation Center Supervisor for the City of Hickory. He had the great opportunity to work his way up the organizational ladder and was named Parks and Recreation Director in June of 1998. He has served in numerous leadership capacities within the North Carolina Recreation and Park Association culminating in his service as President in 2011. He also serves on the board of directors of several organizations in the Hickory area including the Hickory Metro Sports Commission, Kiwanis Club of Western Catawba County, Catawba County Sports Hall of Fame, Tar Heel Leagues, Inc. and the Dick's Sporting Goods Classic Basketball Tournament Committee. Mack and his wife Rebecca live in Hickory and are the proud parents of two sons, Ian and Morgan.



Lewis Ledford

Lewis is the Executive Director of the National Association of State Park Directors. Previously he enjoyed a long career with the North Carolina state parks system, and, in 2003, he was named director. He was the first entry-level ranger to head the agency. During his tenure as director, NC state parks experienced unprecedented growth, including the addition of a state trail, six state natural areas and five new state parks. He worked with the state legislature to support parks, resulting in \$437 million being invested in state and local parks. He has served on the National Recreation and Parks Association Board of Directors. He currently serves on the NC Parks and Recreation Authority, NCSU College of Natural Resources Foundation, and is active with other national and state associations and charitable organizations. In 2013, he was admitted to the American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration. Lewis, a graduate of Appalachian State University, lives with his wife Susan and their German shepherd dog, Hudson, in Raleigh

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Jill Mills Re.D.

Dr. Mills is Professor and Chair of the Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Mount Olive. She is a graduate of Southern Illinois University, and worked for many years in Florida in resort and municipal recreation before attending graduate school at North Carolina State University (M.S. Park, Recreation and Tourism Management) and Indiana University (Re.D. Recreation Administration). In addition to 15 years at UMO, she has taught at East Carolina University and Indiana University. Jill and her husband Greg live in Raleigh with their teenage son, Carter. The family enjoys camping, boating, hiking, travel and pickleball.



Dina Neeley

Dina is a 1986 graduate of Kansas State University with a B.S. degree in Apparel and Textile Marketing. Dina has worked with Musco Sports Lighting since 2003. Currently Dina continues to work with Musco on the implementation of lighting standard updates for the North Carolina High School Athletic Association and safe lighting practices for all North Carolina State Associations. Dina is a member of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA). For the past 6 years Dina has been active on the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Women's LeadHERship conference committee.



Stephen Poulos

Stephen graduated from UNC-Wilmington in 1982 with a BA in Business Management, and gained his Masters in Sports Management from Appalachian State University in 1992. That same year, his professional career as the assistant athletic director for Watauga County Parks and Recreation began and he was promoted to Director in 2003. Stephen has served on the North Carolina Recreation and Park Association Executive Board since 2012, and was elected president in 2014. He has served on the steering committees for the NC Park & Recreation Directors Conference and the Athletic Directors Workshop steering committee. In 1999 he served on the Special Olympics World Games Host Town Committee.



David Proper

David currently serves as Urban Program Director for The Conservation Fund where he is responsible for developing The Fund's urban conservation effort across North Carolina. He previously worked with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) for 13 years, most recently as State Director for North and South Carolina where he managed state-wide programs and local initiatives focused on natural resource protection and the creation of new parks and trails. Prior to joining TPL, he spent 17 years in the public sector as Property Officer for Wake County government. David graduated with a BS in Environmental Conservation from the University of New Hampshire and also received a Forestry degree from Paul Smith's College. David and his wife, Ann Marie, have made the Triangle area their home for over 35 years where he has been an active volunteer serving on various boards and advisory councils.

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Sonya Shaw

Sonya currently serves as Director of Garner Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources. As parks and recreation professional for nearly 25 years, her career interests include advocacy for educational and training opportunities of underrepresented minority students and young professionals in the field of parks and recreation. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Recreation Administration from the University of NC at Chapel Hill, and Master's Degrees in both Public Administration and Counseling from NC Central University. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management from NC State.



Michelle Wells

Michelle serves as the Executive Director of the NC Recreation and Park Association (NCRPA). Michelle joined NCRPA in 1998 and became the director in 2012. She graduated from NC State University with an undergraduate degree in Recreation Resource Administration in 1989, a Masters in Public Administration and a Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management in 2005. Prior to joining the staff at NCRPA, she worked for NC Senior Games. Michelle resides in Raleigh and enjoys walking, cycling, concerts, cooking and spending time with friends and family. She participates in various charity cycling events throughout the year



Lisa Wolff

Lisa is the Superintendent of Recreation Programming with Burlington Recreation & Parks. She has proudly served the department for over 27 years. Earning her B.S. degree from Elon University in Leisure & Sport Management followed by a Graduate Degree in Organizational Change and Leadership, Lisa's passion for the profession has earned her numerous awards and recognitions including the 2005 Meritorious Service Award from the North Carolina Recreation & Parks Association (NCRPA) and served as their President of NCRPA in 2012. Lisa is member of the NC Parks and Recreation Authority and an adjunct professor at Elon University. Active within the Burlington community, Lisa serves on various collaborative community boards and committees. She and her husband live in Burlington with their two sons.