

NC State Extension State Advisory Council Member Biographies

Patricia “Pat” Adams, Southeast District
2017-2020 (1st Term)

Pat grew up on a tobacco farm in eastern North Carolina and attended NCSU where she studied History. She met her husband, John, while attending NCSU. After graduation, they bought a pig farm in Greene County where her family has enjoyed living in rural North Carolina and participating in various 4-H programs, including raising horses, heifers, pigs, lambs and a host of other projects. She has two adult children who now enjoy exciting careers, to which she credits their 4-H and Extension experiences.

She enjoyed a career with Wachovia/Wells Fargo (now retired), and has held a seat on the Greene County Board of Education for more than 23 years, including serving as chair for several years. She has been a delegate to the NC School Board Association and is an Extension Master Gardener. She has been a member of the advisory committee for the coastal Plains Boys and Girls Club and a member of the Greene County Economic Development Commission. She is an active volunteer with her church and has served in numerous positions with local school parent organizations.

Carl Bond, Northeast District
2018-2021 (1st Term)

Carl is proud to be a third-generation farmer from Windsor, NC. He is a graduate of NC A&T State University with a degree in Agricultural Education and Agricultural Economics. He taught Vocational Agricultural for a short time before beginning his 31.5-year career with USDA-FmHA/FSA. He continued to work at the farm with his parents throughout his career, and after retirement came back to the farm full time until 2016.

He has served two terms (2010-2016) on the NCA&TSU Cooperative Extension Service Strategic Planning Council and has also served in Bertie County as an advisory council member.



Joyce "Joy" Boothe, West District
2015-2019 (2nd Term)

Joy was born in to a farm family in south Alabama. Since 1973, she and her husband have lived in Yancey County, raising their two sons in a home they built together on the side of a mountain 37 years ago. Building the home themselves, they learned a lot about working together and making best use of resources.

Joy has worked in education, real estate, and as supervisor of a hospital fitness/rehabilitation center, and currently enjoys working as a consultant. Always active in community life, she has served on several boards and commissions, and has enjoyed serving as President of the Yancey Chamber of Commerce. Joy enjoys gardening, hiking, scuba diving, and is also a published author.

Kay Bullard, South Central District
2016-2019 (1st Term)

Kay retired from the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation Service in 2013 with 14 years of service. During her tenure there, she was instrumental in transforming the educational lessons provided by that agency by incorporating educational goals and objectives to improve outcomes. She also worked to establish the Area 7 Envirothon competition for students in both public schools and home schools.

Kay serves on the Cumberland County Family and Consumer Sciences Advisory Committee and is active in the Cumberland County Extension Community Association. She also serves on the Executive Board of the NC Education Office Personnel Association. She is an active volunteer at the local Extension office and presents Extension educational sessions for the Better Living Series, CCEA programs and Master Gardener programs.

Kay's husband, Ray, and her son work 1200 acres of farmland where they grow corn, wheat, soybeans and raise hogs and turkeys. She is the proud grandmother of three grandsons. Kay is active in her church and is involved in several other volunteer opportunities in her community.

Timothy “Van” Cooke, West District
2016-2019 (1st Term)

Born and raised in Surry County, North Carolina, Van graduated from NC State with a double major in Agriculture Education and Business Management. At the onset of Desert Storm, Van enlisted in the US Navy to serve his country. Commander Cooke retired in 2012 and returned to Surry County, where he bought a small farm. As owner and operator of Salty Dog Farms, a small vegetable operation, Van stays busy in his community.

Van is a life member of FFA, a member of the Farm Bureau, active with the Farmer-Veteran Coalition and with Veterans of Foreign Wars. Active in his community, Van is a strong advocate for rural economic development and American agriculture.



Richard “Dick” Fisher, North Central District
2014-2017 (1st Term)

Dick was born in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, but his family moved to Raleigh when he was 13 years old. He graduated from high school in Wake Forest, NC, and went on to Wake Forest College where he earned a BS in Science Education. Dick then served four years in the US Army, including a year in Viet Nam. Upon leaving the Army, Dick earned an MA in Counseling from Appalachian State University, then worked as a counselor at Western Piedmont Community College. His next career move took him to NC State University where he earned an Ed.D. in Adult and Community College Education.

Dick and his wife, Linda, then took sons Rick, Jr. and Willy to Tennessee where he worked for four years. In 1981, he made a career change and moved his family to Burlington, NC where he began a 30-year career in investments and financial planning.

In his retirement, Dick has served on several advisory boards, including Salvation Army, 4-H & Youth Committee, Alamance County Extension Advisory Council, and multiple leadership roles at the First Presbyterian Church. He also serves on the Board of Trustees of Alamance Community College, is an Eagle Scout, and is a retired Major from the NC Army National Guard. His current interests include walking, travel, tennis, volunteer work, and five wonderful grandkids.



Amanda Hodges, North Central District
2018-2021 (1st Term)

Amanda grew up on a family tobacco farm in Caswell County and graduated from East Carolina University with a degree in marketing. She moved to Denver, Colorado, to begin a career in advertising/marketing where she gained knowledge while marketing companies from small businesses to international corporations spanning healthcare, high-tech, finance and retail. Amanda returned to Caswell County with more than 20 years of experience ready to become an active member of the rural farm community and make a difference. She serves as Director of Outreach and Development at Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group where she combines her knowledge of digital marketing with her love of rural North Carolina to assist in marketing the ag world.

Her family farm is now a cow/calf operation and she has been able to establish herself working in a home office and participating in the agricultural community in Caswell County.

Margaret “Meg” Howdy, Northeast District
2019-2022 (1st Term)

Meg is a native of Washington, NC, in Beaufort County. She attended UNC-Chapel Hill and then returned home to Washington where she worked for 13 years in community banking. In 2018, Meg became Executive Director of the Washington Harbor District Alliance which focuses on economic development in Washington’s downtown business district on the waterfront. Meg is a Net Promoter Certified Associate Professional as well as a Certified Financial Instructor.

She serves as President of the Beaufort County United Way Board of Directors and is involved on several committees with the First United Methodist Church. She assists with 4-H livestock shows and has led the 4-H Fit Club in addition to serving on the county’s Healthy Eating Active Living Collaborative. She also manages the Washington Saturday Farmers & Artisans Market. Meg lives in downtown Washington with her two dogs, Champ and Gracie.



Ray Jeffers, North Central District
2019-2022 (1st Term)

Ray was born and raised in Person County. He attended Person County Schools and continued his education at Piedmont Community College and North Carolina Agriculture & Technical State University. He was motivated to become politically involved because of his school affiliations and extracurricular activities as well as his love of volunteering. At the time of his first election in 2008, Ray became the youngest commissioner elected in the state of North Carolina. In 2013, Ray was sworn in as the 97th President of the NC Association of County Commissioners, becoming the first Person County Commissioner to hold the title as well as the youngest to ever hold that position in the Association. He is currently serving his third term as a Person County Commissioner.

He owns and operates BR Jeffers Farms and is passionate about economic development, farmland preservation, education and support of small businesses. He is active in Shriners and Masons. He serves on numerous boards and committees, including the Rural Action Caucus for the National Association of Counties where he and other key county officials represent America's rural counties, burroughs and parishes in Washington, DC to discuss federal issues and legislation of importance to rural areas.

Deborah Johnson, Southeast District
2016-2019 (1st Term)

A native of North Carolina and a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill with degrees in journalism and speech communication, Deborah Johnson has devoted her career to agricultural advocacy and rural economic development. She grew up on a row crop farm and has worked in poultry and livestock production agriculture since 1980. She joined the NC Pork Council as its chief executive officer in 2005 with previous work experience at Prestage Farms, Premium Standard Farms, Cape Fear Farm Credit and the North Carolina Ports Authority.

Over the years, Deborah has been involved with numerous organizations in her local community from serving on her county's public library board of directors to volunteering with the local Meals on Wheels program. She has served on a variety of state boards and committees, and on the national level, Deborah was appointed twice by the US Secretary of Agriculture to serve on the National Pork Board.

William “Bill” Kearney, Northeast District
2018-2021 (1st Term)

Bill serves as the Community Outreach Manager at the UNC-Chapel Hill Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, specializing in asset-based capacity building for groups and communities. An ordained minister, Bill serves as an Associate Minister at Coley Spring Missionary Baptist Church and as President of United Shiloh Missionary Baptist Association Church Union in Warren County, NC. He is a key collaborator in several community-based research partnerships aimed at promoting regular physical activity, fruit and vegetable consumption, and healthy environments as a means of preventing and managing chronic diseases. Bill has co-authored numerous publications, manuscripts and video documentaries.



Jane Kulesza, Southeast District
2013-2019 (2nd Term)

Jane has dedicated much of her life to math and science education. She is an active 4-H volunteer in Brunswick County, and serves as treasurer on the Board for Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter, a shore bird and raptor rehabilitation center on Oak Island. Jane is also a Teaching Assistants Chair at the Children’s School of Science in Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

While earning her Master’s degree in Mathematics at UNC-CH, Jane met her husband, Gus Grosch. They have a son (a former 4-H’er) who is now studying archaeology in college.

Charlette Lindell, NCA&TSU Strategic Planning Council Liaison
2019-2021

Leon McKoy, South Central District
2014-2020 (2nd Term)

Leon retired from the US Department of Health and Human Services after a 35-year career focused on economic development. Through his efforts as a project manager and economic developer, he worked to support Indian Reservations located in North Carolina, South Dakota, California, Utah, North Dakota and Montana. He managed an annual budget of \$10 million.

He has served on the Harnett County Extension Advisory Council, including serving four years as chair. He has worked closely with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in developing an economic development plan to be funded by the Federal Government. Leon has served on the SAFE Board of Directors, the United Way Board of Directors, and as a member of the Lillington Rotary Club. He is also a Leadership Harnett alumni member.

Edgar Miller, North Central District
2017-2020 (1st Term)

Ed is a retired dairy farmer from Winston Salem, NC. He served in Philippines and the western Pacific during the Vietnam War and returned to work with RJ Reynolds for training as a tobacco buyer. He returned to the family farm to run a registered Holstein operation in 1969, and married Beverly Kiser, with whom he adopted two sons, Joe and Ricky, and daughter, Emily.

He was the 2016 winner of the State Extension Award for Service to Extension. Ed has served on the Board of the National Holstein Association and the State Holstein Association and currently serves as show chairman with the NC Holstein Association. He served as Chair of the National Holstein Convention in 2003 and as an announcer for youth dairy shows at the NC State Fair. He has served with the Forsyth County Farm Bureau, and is a volunteer at a local homeless shelter as well as serving as President of the United Methodist Men at his church.



Noland Ramsey, CARET Representative

Formerly a member of the State Advisory Council, Noland now serves as the CARET representative for NC State University.

Scott Reece, Northeast District
2018-2021 (1st Term)

Scott is a 1990 graduate of NC State University. This fourth generation legacy student holds two degrees, a BS in AgriEconomics and a BS in Agricultural Business Management. For 21 years he worked in corporate banking, and most recently has been employed with Farm Credit Services for six years.

Scott grew up in Montgomery County where his father served as County Extension Director until his retirement in 1995. He currently serves as Chairman of the Franklin County Extension Advisory Council. He is a proud Eagle Scout.

Linda Rivenbark, Southeast District
2016-2019 (1st Term)

Linda serves as a member of the Bladen County Family and Consumer Sciences Specialized Committee, the County Advisory Council, and with the Extension Community Association. She has held leadership positions with each of these councils, and has been active at the District and State levels of ECA. She has served on the ECA Foundation Board, helping to plan the ECA Centennial Event.

Linda is active in DAR and in her church in addition to volunteering with several community organizations.



Beverly “Marty” Smith, North Central District
2013-2019 (2nd Term)

Marty is a native of rural Lenoir, Jones and Craven Counties, where she grew up on tobacco farms, participated in 4-H and worked for the ASCS office prior to college. She earned a BS from East Carolina (History/Political Science/Business), her MA from North Carolina Central (Sociology/Education), and her Ed.D. from North Carolina State University (Educational Leadership/Public Administration). She spent her early career in education in Brunswick and Wayne County school systems, then spent 30 years in the Vance County schools prior to her retirement. In her career, she has served as a teacher, coach, school principal and system administrator. Her work has involved extensive partnering with community organizations focused on community improvement and lifelong learning opportunities, which often included Cooperative Extension programs. Shortly after retiring, she joined the Granville County Advisory Council.

Though retired, Marty continues private consulting projects with area school systems, local governmental groups and community organizations providing staff training, grant writing, project and program evaluations, and program monitoring. She continues to serve as a member of the NC Public Schools Committee of Practitioners, is a retired member of the NC Association of Compensatory Educators and the National Association of Federal Education Program Administrators. She is also active as an officer in the Henderson Business and Professional Women’s Association (BPW).

Myron Smith, Southeast District
2018-2021 (1st Term)

Myron graduated from NCSU with a BS in Horticulture in 1975. He planned to return to the family tobacco farm, but after the untimely death of his father, he decided to teach school for a brief time, serving at Wilkes Community College. After a year in this role, he decided that teaching was not the right career for him and he went to work in a management role at Wilder's Nursery in Knightdale, NC. In 1980, he started his own nursery, Smith's Nursery, in Benson on the family farm. The nursery includes woody ornamentals and other plants, including strawberries, blueberries and greenhouse tomatoes. The farm is also an agritourism site and offers ice cream and other activities. He operates the nursery with his wife, Sarah, and their sons, Chris and Mitch.

He has been an active member of the Johnston Nursery Association for many years and has also served two terms on the Extension Advisory Council in Johnston County. He currently serves on the Voluntary Agricultural District Board for the county and is an active volunteer fireman. He is also involved as a Farm Bureau Board Member and as an active member of his church.

Jim Toole, West District
2018-2021 (1st Term)

Jim is active in all facets of Extension programming in Cleveland County where he chairs the County Extension Advisory Council. He is an active Extension Master Gardener Volunteer and is an outspoken advocate for the importance of local foods in the local economy. He is dedicated to Extension and excited about continuing to serve in this new capacity.

Barbara Walker, West District
2019-2021 (1st Term)

Following a long career as a customer service manager for a large corporation, Barbara worked with the Henderson County Extension Center for seven years. Now retired, she is excited about returning to the organization she loves in a volunteer advisory capacity to continue serving citizens in her hometown. She is a native of the county, and works now as an operator for Vineyard, Cidery and Apple Orchards in Henderson County.



Suzanne Wodek, West District
2013-2019 (2nd Term)

Suzanne taught art for two years after college, and spent more than 27 years in the print media field. She retired in 1999 when she moved to North Carolina, and her volunteer career with NC Cooperative Extension began shortly thereafter.

Her volunteer work includes serving as an Extension Master Gardener, serving as a Docent at the Arboretum, and serving on the Education, Horticulture and Marketing Committee at the Botanical Garden in Asheville. She has served on the Buncombe County Master Gardening Volunteer Advisory Committee for several years and also currently serves on the Buncombe County Extension Advisory Council. In addition, she serves as a Board Member and officer on the Botanical Garden Board of Directors.

Karen Zika, South Central District
2017-2020 (1st Term)

Karen participated in 4-H as a teenager and began volunteering as a club leader when her four children enrolled. Together, they participated in a variety of project areas, including entomology, photography, clothing construction, and electric. She studied civil engineering in college and then switched to humanities; she continues to enjoy teaching and tutoring math and science subjects as well as English communication and arts. With her children now grown, Karen teaches sewing and fiber arts, electric projects and various art projects for 4-H in addition to helping with county fairs and serving on her County Extension Advisory Group. In addition, she has served on the Southern Region 4-H Volunteer Advisory Team to discuss and address challenges and needs identified by volunteers in the southernmost 13 states. Her side interests include book editing, custom sewing, and gardening with her husband, an avid and innovative composter.