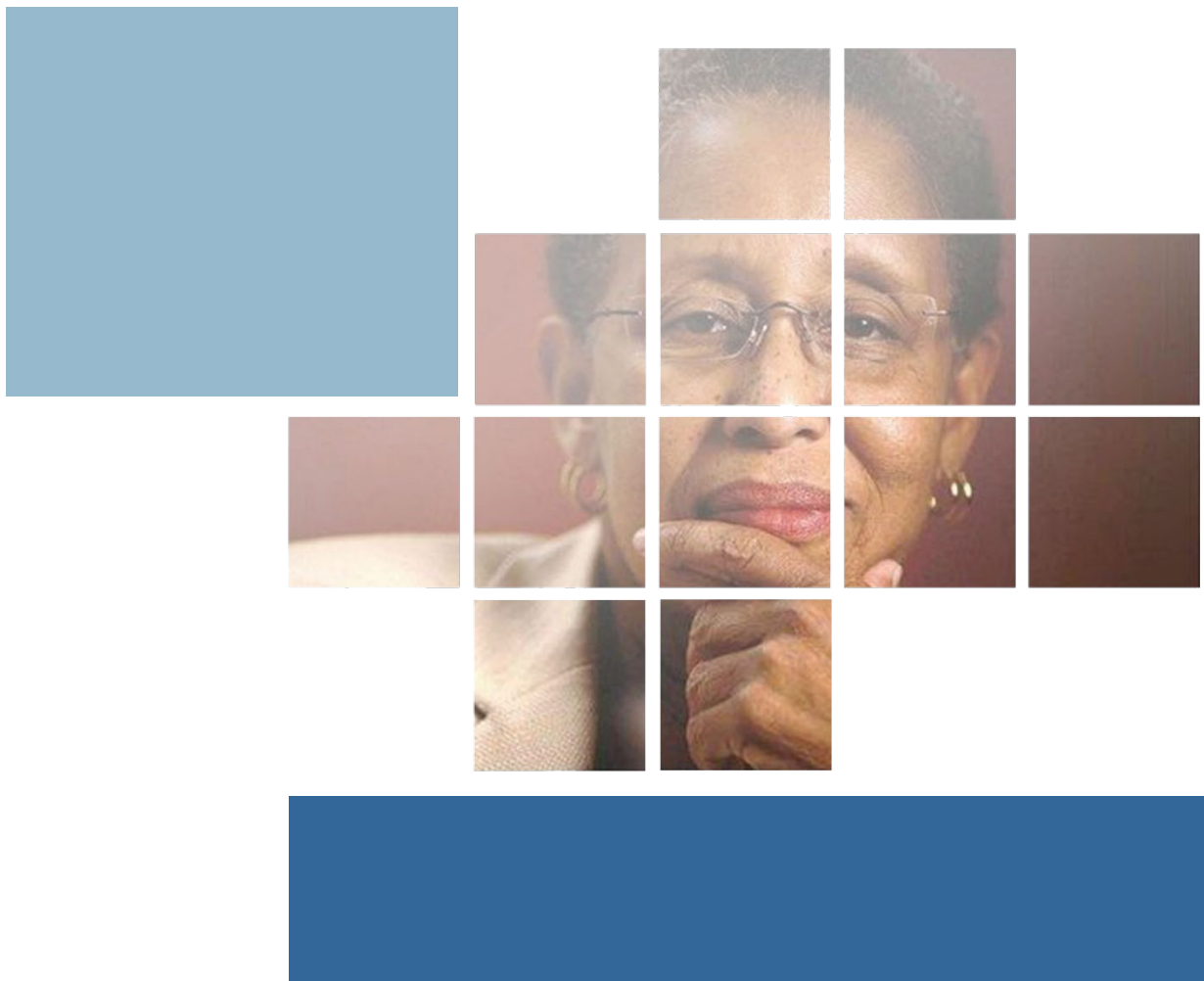


---

# Andrea Harris

## Equity Task Force

### June 2023 Biannual Report





**Roy Cooper**  
Governor

**Pamela B. Cashwell**  
Secretary

Dear Governor Cooper,

As the first iteration of Executive Order 143 Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force sunset, the NC Department of Administration worked extensively with the NC Governor's Office on Executive Order 268 to establish the Andrea Harris Equity Task Force. I am excited for the continuation of the work of her legacy. I look forward to seeing what new directions and ideas come to fruition working alongside our members for a more equitable North Carolina.

We continue to work with recommendations left from the past Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force while shifting focus away from pandemic recovery goals and strategies three years from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The newly established Task Force will advocate for efforts that sustain the Executive Order 143 recommendations, address long-standing inequities, and continue implementing Andrea Harris' legacy through business and community development.

With Task Force members old and new, there is a connecting thread of their passion for equity in NC. I look forward to working with my colleagues in sister cabinet agencies and our community partners to keep equity and inclusion at the forefront of everything we do on behalf of the people of North Carolina.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pamela B. Cashwell".

Pamela B. Cashwell  
Secretary

# Contents

- June 2023 Biannual Executive Summary..... 4**
- Andrea Harris Equity Task Force Members ..... 5**
- Meeting Overviews..... 7**
- Subcommittee Updates ..... 12**
- About Dr. Andrea Harris..... 15**

# June 2023 Biannual Executive Summary

As directed by [EO 143](#)<sup>1</sup>, the former Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force (AHTF) housed within the NC Department of Administration (DOA) sunset on June 4, 2022. The EO 143 AHTF developed 21 recommendations, with 14 recommendations fully implemented before sunsetting. Several remaining recommendations related to Medicaid expansion have now been signed into effect and will begin with the passing of a new FY 23-24 budget.

Seeking to continue work that began under EO 143, the new Andrea Harris Equity Task Force (Task Force) was established on August 17, 2022, under EO 268. A signing event was held for the occasion, with a transition of old and new members from the prior Task Force to the new Andrea Harris Equity Task Force. The [June 2022 Report](#)<sup>2</sup> findings and [EO 268](#)<sup>3</sup> were published on the DOA website, and a new charge was given to the new Task Force.

The mission of the Task Force is to identify best practices and advise state government on actions that will further the economic development of disadvantaged communities, improve health and wellness outcomes in underserved communities, and advance equitable practices within state agencies that are inclusive of the lived experience of all North Carolinians. The Task Force will also review prior outstanding recommendations identified by the EO 143 AHTF and determine the next steps to advance progress in the outlined focus areas of the new mission.

As required by EO 268, this biannual report provides updates on the status of the Task Force and its recommendations.

---

<sup>1</sup> Executive Order No. 143 Addressing the Disproportionate Impact of Covid-19 On Communities of Color, <https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/EO143-Addressing-the-Disproportionate-Impact-of-COVID-19-on-Communities-of-Color.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force June 2022 Biannual Report, <https://ncadmin.nc.gov/andrea-harris-task-force-june-2022-biannual-report/open>

<sup>3</sup> Executive Order No. 268 Reestablishing The Andrea Harris Equity Task Force, <https://governor.nc.gov/executive-order-no-268/open>

# Andrea Harris Equity Task Force Members

**Chair:** Pamela B. Cashwell, Secretary, NC Department of Administration

## **DEI & Outreach Committee**

Betty Marrow-Taylor (Chair) \*  
Dr. Shun Robertson  
Greg Richardson \*  
Stephanie McGarrah \*  
Annette Taylor \*  
Quinny Sanchez Lopez \*  
Juvencio Rocha Peralta \*  
R. Andrew Spainhour  
Dr. James Johnson Jr. \*  
Christy Dunston

## **Economic Development Committee**

Haihui Huang (Chair)  
Annette Stevenson  
Yahel Flores  
Tunya Smith  
Kevin Price \*  
Adrienne Spinner  
Dr. Cedric Bright \*  
Dr. Angela Coleman  
Albert "Trey" Rabon III \*  
DeWarren Langley

## **Wellness Outcomes Committee**

Dr. Sonya Richardson (Chair) \*  
Margaret Weller-Stargell \*  
Jordan Lopez \*  
Yazmin Garcia Rico \*  
Dr. Lenora Campbell \*  
Debra Farrington \*

## **The following members are no longer on the Task Force:**

Shannon Palmer  
Victoria Blackwell  
Secretary Elizabeth Biser  
Dr. Giselle Corbie, MD, MSc  
Dr. Catherine Harvey Sevier  
Andres Henao  
Rep. Donny Lambeth  
Dr. Vivianna Martinez-Bianchi  
Dr. Carlos Rish  
Dr. Christy Clayton  
Eugene Woods  
Fernando Little  
Dr. Rhett Brown  
Dr. Charlene Green  
Dr. John Lumpkin  
Rep. Yvonne Holley  
C.C. Lamberth Jr.  
Dale Jenkins  
Adriana Chevala  
Walter Baucom  
Lynn Bottone  
Pat Martinez  
Rev. Dr. Jonathan Augustine  
Rev. Dr. T. Anthony Spearman  
Justin Truesdale

\* Indicates returning members

### **Liaisons and Agency Staff Support List**

The following staff members from state agencies support the Task Force subcommittees in their work.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Subcommittee</b>
Gianna Quilici	NC Dept. of Administration (DOA)	Wellness Outcomes
Michael Leach*	NC Dept. of Health and Human Services (DHHS)	Wellness Outcomes
Michael Arnold*	NC Office of State Budget & Management (OSBM)	Wellness Outcomes
Christy Berk	NC Department of Transportation	Wellness Outcomes
Dr. Andrea DeSantis	Office of the Governor	Economic Development
Emily Roach	NC Department of Commerce	Economic Development
Carolina Fonseca Jimenez*	NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)	DEI & Outreach
Tracey Burns*	NC Department of Transportation (DOT)	DEI & Outreach

# Meeting Overviews

## Meeting: December 7, 2022

The Task Force convened for the first-ever in-person meeting on December 7, 2022. Utilizing the time together, members old and new met and aligned themselves with the new mission and charge. All appointed members and agency liaisons shared introductions about themselves, their roles, their organization, and the communities they represent. DOA leadership also shared with members more about the creation of EO 268 and the new charge for the Task Force.



(Pictured: Secretary Cashwell providing Task Force members with their charge)

Secretary Cashwell and the DOA Policy Team led a presentation on the new structure of the Task Force and its subcommittees. The initial EO 143 AHTF focused on balancing health-related work with economic development inequities, establishing educational opportunities, and digital equity access issues highlighted during the height of the COVID-10 pandemic. As the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic reduced and related emergency orders for North Carolina were revoked, the EO 143 AHTF support staff had to reevaluate focus areas. This reevaluation kept in mind the legacy of Dr. Harris, focusing on what she would have wanted to accomplish. As a result, the restructured EO 268 Task Force consists of three subcommittees focused on economic initiatives, wellness outcomes, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) outcomes.

During this first meeting, the members focused on bridging the gap between community engagement and state agency initiatives and projects. The Task Force will focus on state-

community collaborations, with members contributing to discussions, and representing the entities or communities they serve.

State agency stakeholders will use feedback and reports from community representatives to ensure current initiatives have the intended impact in supporting the people of North Carolina. Similarly, the organization and community representatives are charged with promoting and disseminating information about state agency initiatives within their local community by distributing information throughout their networks, focusing on historically underserved, marginalized, and excluded groups. The organization and community representatives will share what they hear from their communities to help state agencies identify where needs are met or where gaps continue.

The first issue addressed pertained to statewide broadband access, its relationship to DEI, and the economic impact on households and North Carolinians not connected to high-speed internet. The NC Department of Information Technology (DIT) & NC Pandemic Recovery Office (NCPRO) received \$5.4 billion in federal broadband money to aid in building infrastructure in underserved communities. DIT and NCPRO shared information about Federal Communications Commission (FCC) maps, local government staffing issues, and shared a broadband survey to collect additional data. One member pointed out that an obstacle with government-sponsored surveys is that marginalized, underrepresented, or excluded communities lack trust in the government and often do not participate. Unfortunately, these are the same communities at risk of not having high-speed internet access.

After a presentation of new [Historically Underutilized Business \(HUB\) rules](#)<sup>4</sup>, the members also discussed increasing access to opportunities for HUB-certified firms as well as tracking HUB data through a dashboard in one location. There was state agency emphasis on Task Force members and liaisons helping DOA spread the word about becoming HUB-certified to minority-owned/disadvantaged/veteran-owned/women-owned and small businesses, with an emphasis on rural communities.

### **Meeting: March 15, 2023**

The second Task Force meeting was held on March 15, 2023, at the Administration Building. During this meeting, state agency representatives presented on agency initiatives that align with the mission and work of the Task Force. The agency representatives were asked to present on the following questions:

1. What does your agency do as a high-level explanation?
2. What is your agency doing that is tied to the mission of the Task Force?

---

<sup>4</sup> Administrative Rules Review, <https://ncadmin.nc.gov/about-doa/administrative-rules-review>



3. What is being done and what can the Task Force members assist with? What community input would be helpful?
4. What is on your agency's to-do list? Goals? Of those, what within your agency's legislative priorities relate to the work of the Task Force?



(Pictured: DEQ's Carolina Fonseca Jimenez presenting agency priorities to Task Force members and liaisons)

DHHS, DNCR, DOT, DOA, DEQ, Commerce, and the Office of the Governor all presented. Below is a summary of some of the agency initiatives related to the Task Force:

NC Department of Environmental Quality: DEQ is working to further promote equity and inclusion throughout the state while ensuring community wellness and environmental safety through its divisions and programs. The Secretary's Environmental Justice & Equity Advisory Board advises the Secretary on environmental issues and celebrates diversity in North Carolina. The agency continues to make the DEQ Grants Page and the Language Access Plan inclusive and accessible to underserved communities. Further, the DEQ Public Participation Plan and the Flood Resiliency Blueprint are working to engage North Carolinians in securing available environmental resources for healthy, safe communities. Task Force members can engage stakeholders in the efforts of DEQ, along with sharing best practices and community-based insight with DEQ representatives.

NC Department of Commerce: Commerce is focused on promoting equity and building a strong workforce within North Carolina through sustainable economic programs and partnerships. The Short-Term Compensation program will continue to be developed through

legislative action to assist North Carolinians in retaining work during economic downturns or natural disasters. Similarly, the Business Relationship Manager tool and department-based strategic practices encourage the engagement of Historically Underutilized Businesses, Small Business Enterprises (SBEs), Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), and Historically Underutilized Providers (HUPs) while giving incentives for sustainability and DEI work-based projects. Task Force members can promote Commerce's NC Works program, which focuses on bringing a varied strong talent pool to job opportunities while stabilizing businesses and creating a more equitable economy for the state.

NC Department of Transportation: DOT is working to eliminate disparities in the state through equitable and environmentally conscious transportation efforts on behalf of all North Carolinians. Specifically, DOT continues to engage small and historically underutilized businesses through contracting opportunities to establish North Carolina as an equitable and multimodal state. Job training, outreach initiatives, DEI projects, and technical skills training for small contractors all correlate to the efforts of DOT uplifting North Carolina businesses and the workforce economy. Task Force members can engage community stakeholders with the NC Clean Transportation Plan focused on decarbonizing North Carolina's transportation sector.

NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources: DNCR is working diligently to encourage the overall wellness of North Carolinians while supporting local communities through historical education and grant opportunities. The efforts of DNCR include promoting physical activity and increased diversity in North Carolina's state parks and greenways. Similarly, DNCR is funding communities and leading initiatives that promote community wellness by increasing the number of safe, natural environments instead of buildings. The Task Force members can engage stakeholders, inform community members of DNCR's historical education efforts, and encourage North Carolinians to utilize the state parks and greenways.

NC Department of Health & Human Services: DHHS is engaged in eliminating health disparities and accessibility to wellness resources for all North Carolinians. Through inclusive practices, DHHS continues to focus on health and wellness opportunities and outcomes for historically marginalized populations. Child and family healthcare programs and other wellness securities are a priority within North Carolina's schools and communities. The Task Force can assist by engaging stakeholders, educating community members about health and wellness resources, and promoting inclusive programs run by DHHS.

NC Office of the Governor: The Office of the Governor is working diligently to lead fellow state agencies in the management of wellness initiatives, economic and workforce development, and equity projects. The Office of the Governor and NC Governor Roy Cooper introduced a \$1 billion roadmap to addressing behavioral health and resiliency disparities and supporting mental health resources. Similarly, the creation of the Office of Violence

Prevention and [Executive Order No. 246](#)<sup>5</sup> are efforts directed at ensuring safe, sustainable living for North Carolina’s communities. Further, language access efforts and cultural competency education are two diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities for the Governor’s Office. Statewide equity and diversity mindsets also lead to the support and expansion of historically underutilized businesses and small business enterprises in hopes of strengthening North Carolina’s economy. Task Force members can assist in communicating efforts to stakeholders, supporting recommended budget allocations, and providing community-based insight into the needs of North Carolinians.

NC Department of Administration: DOA operates directly to support and manage North Carolina state government agencies and operations. The Office of Historically Underutilized Businesses works to further economic stability and development along with supporting economic operations among other state agencies. The Council for Women and Youth Involvement and the Commission on Indian Affairs divisions operate to provide overall wellness and equity support to underrecognized and marginalized populations. Similarly, the DOA Facility Management division’s efforts include utilizing electric vehicles to ensure safer, cleaner communities in North Carolina. Task Force members can support the initiatives of DOA’s advocacy groups and engage stakeholders about the efforts at the department.

NC Office of State Budget & Management: OSBM focuses on economic stability and growth through budgets, business development, and financial reporting efforts. OSBM prepares and recommends the Governor’s budget while administering the budget approved by the General Assembly. Further, this office ensures that public resources and funding are used effectively and efficiently to benefit all North Carolinians and the state. The Pandemic Recovery Office (PRO) and the Office of Disaster Relief (ODR) provide support and wellness resources to ensure the safety of community members. Similarly, the Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP) fosters equity conversations and meaningful, diverse partnerships to grow advocacy, research, and collaboration within North Carolina. The Task Force members can support proposed budget allocations and engage with NC PRO, ODR, and OSP.

---

<sup>5</sup> NC Executive Order 246, North Carolina’s Transformation to a Clean, Equitable Economy, <https://governor.nc.gov/executive-order-no-246> (2022)

# Subcommittee Updates

## Economic Development Committee

The Economic Development Subcommittee held its first meeting on May 24, 2023. Tasked with furthering the economic development of disadvantaged communities, members and agency liaisons identified their desired focus laid out through EO 268:

- 1. Discuss strategies to provide economic incentives to encourage participation with HUBs, Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), Small Business Enterprises (SBEs), and Historically Underutilized Providers (HUPs);*
- 2. Promote mentorship opportunities to diverse businesses and leverage partnerships with North Carolina Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions to develop executive education programs available to minority-owned businesses doing business in the state; and*
- 3. Identify and promote education pipeline programs for students of color and students from disadvantaged communities.*

To address these areas of focus, the subcommittee discussed:

- Researching and reviewing the 2020 NC DOA Disparity Study ([Volume 1- State Agencies](#)<sup>6</sup> & [Volume 2- Community Colleges & Universities](#)<sup>7</sup>) to understand statewide outcomes as well as recommendations.
- Connecting with the [NC Minority and Women Business Enterprise \(MWBE\)](#)<sup>8</sup> Coordinators Network working within the Community College System and the UNC System as well as local business associations and organizations to understand what is being done to engage HUBs/SBEs/DBEs/HUPs.
- The importance of providing mentorships for a variety of certified and non-certified diverse businesses.
- Collaborating on a project the Department of Commerce began this year in prioritizing sustainability, work-based learning, and DEI initiatives with businesses looking to move to North Carolina.

---

<sup>6</sup> State of North Carolina Department of Administration Disparity Study Report Volume 1, State Agencies, <https://ncadmin.nc.gov/documents/files/disparity-study-volume-1/download> (2020)

<sup>7</sup> State of North Carolina Department of Administration Disparity Study Report Volume 1, Community Colleges & Universities, <https://ncadmin.nc.gov/documents/files/disparity-study-volume-2/download> (2021)

<sup>8</sup> NC Minority and Women Business Enterprise Coordinators' Network (2023), <http://mwbenetwork.org/>

- Connecting HUBs/DBEs/SBEs/HUPs to opportunities and continuing to identify ways to bridge economic disparities.

## Wellness Committee

The first meeting of the Wellness Outcomes Subcommittee took place on May 19, 2023. Members and agency liaisons identified their focus areas of health and wellness under the following charges from EO 268:

1. *Assess existing opportunities for patients to utilize telehealth services and identify gaps in access to medical services; and*
2. *Advocate for adequate, sustainable financial resources for digital and health education, partnering with state agencies and other groups that share similar goals to increase broadband access and address digital, financial, and health literacy.*

As the Andrea Harris Equity Task Force moves to a more holistic idea of wellness, the group met for the second time on June 5 to discuss what the inclusion of ideas such as natural environment and resources means from a health lens. Emphasis was placed on the committee utilizing existing relationships and partnerships and keeping in mind what is feasible to accomplish. The following socioeconomic health focus areas were identified:

<i>Focus Area</i>	<i>Key Priority Topics</i>
<b>Health Care Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medicaid Expansion</li> <li>• Pipeline Programs for Students of Color to Increase Diverse/Bilingual Providers (Ethnicity Matching) while Supporting Minority Health Studies</li> </ul>
<b>Behavioral Health Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pipeline Programs for Students of Color to Increase Diversity/Bilingual Providers (Ethnic Matching)</li> <li>• 988 Crisis &amp; Suicide Lines</li> </ul>
<b>Food Security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Opportunities</li> <li>• Increased Enrollment in Nutrition Support Programs</li> </ul>
<b>Access to Natural Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching Funds for Tier II &amp; Tier III Counties</li> <li>• Aging in Place</li> </ul>

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

The DEI Subcommittee first met on May 18, 2023. Members and agency liaisons shared why DEI work is crucial and discussed the meaning of their charge:

1. *Advancing equitable practices within state agencies that are inclusive of the lived experience of all North Carolinians.*
  - a. *Serve as a forum for equity matters by engaging state agencies' DEI and public engagement leadership to seek input from community stakeholders and foster stronger relationships between state government and the people of North Carolina.*

The group narrowed down the main priorities and goals under this direction. Discussions were held around what success would look like for the committee in terms of Key Performance Metrics.

The subcommittee came up with the following focus areas that the group will work to both narrow down and expand upon over the next meetings:

### *Focus Areas*

- Increased attention to dedicated resources for rural and marginalized communities
- Increasing access to information and specifically ACCURATE information
- Communication Strategy (multi-communication channels)
- Succession planning for communities
- Childcare crisis (childcare deserts, affordability, quality)
- More equitable allocation of grants and funding
- Increase dedicated public engagement positions at state agencies

## Conclusion

All members and agency liaisons will continue to meet both in large group meetings and their respective subcommittees at least monthly. The Task Force will continue to narrow down focus areas and identify concrete items of action within the coming months.

## About Dr. Andrea Harris

*"We need to make sure we always have people at the table who are most affected."*

*–Andrea Harris (2019)*



The Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force is named in honor of the late Andrea Harris. A native North Carolinian, Andrea Harris was a trailblazer for minority businesses and communities. Harris graduated from Bennett College and became one of the youngest community agency directors in the nation, helping fight poverty across three rural North Carolina communities. With an unwavering passion for helping others in need, she co-founded the NC Institute of Minority Economic Development in 1986, where she served as president in 1990. Located in the heart of Durham, the Institute supports minority and women-owned businesses. Harris was named the Lifetime Achievement Winner in Triangle Business Journal's Leaders in Diversity Awards in 2014 and retired from the Institute that same year. After retiring from the Institute, Harris continued to serve on several boards, including the State's Advisory Council for Historically Underutilized Businesses, where she was appointed in 2017. She is a recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the highest award for state service granted by the Office of the Governor, as well as an honorary doctorate from her alma mater, Bennett College.

END OF REPORT