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NCNA Members Running For The State Legislature

By: Pamela Harwell, RN, BSN, CCM & **Dr. Phoebe Pollitt, RN**

Abstract

North Carolina nurses have been represented in the state legislature intermittently since Sam Beam was elected from the 38th House District in 1980. This year we have the opportunity to elect five to the General Assembly, including four NCNA members. Each one deserves our collective support. Here are brief biographies of the outstanding nurse leaders from NCNA in alphabetical order by last name.

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NCNA Members Running for the State Legislature (Tar Heel Nurse, Fall 2022)

By NCNA Members Pamela Harwell, RN, BSN, CCM, and Dr. Phoebe Pollitt, RN; Nursing History Council Members

North Carolina nurses have been represented in the state legislature intermittently since Sam Beam was elected from the 38th House District in 1980. This year we have the opportunity to elect five to the General Assembly, including four NCNA members. Each one deserves our collective support. Here are brief biographies of the outstanding nurse leaders from NCNA in alphabetical order by last name.

Gale Adcock, RN, FNP, FAAN, FAANP -- Running for Senate District 16

Rep. Gale Adcock has been representing the citizens of NC House District 41 for four terms. She will hopefully be the first nurse to win an election to the NC Senate. She has been a nurse practitioner since 1987 and was Chief Health Officer at SAS Institute for 26 years before retiring in October 2020. She is an adjunct faculty member at Duke, UNC-Chapel Hill, East Carolina, and Case Western Reserve University. Rep. Adcock is a past NCNA President, NC Center for Nursing Chair, and 2-term member of the NC Board of Nursing. Governor Bev Purdue appointed Adcock to the legislative Study Commission on Access to Health Insurance and the Blue-Ribbon Task Force on the state Health Plan for Teachers and State Employees. Her committee assignments have included the Appropriations; Health; Commerce; Regulatory reform; Education-Universities; Wildlife Resources; and Homeland Security, Military, and Veterans Affairs. Rep. Adcock's many honors and awards include being named a Woman of Excellence from the National Foundation for Women Legislators (2021), the Cary Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year (2021), the Cary Magazine Women of Western Wake Lifetime Achievement Award recipient (2018), a Capitol Caregiver by AARP North Carolina (2018), the Legislator of the Year by NCNA (2017), and a Champion for Health by the North Carolina Alliance for Health (2017).

Carla Cunningham, BN, BSN – Running for House District 106

Rep. Carla Cunningham has made a difference in the lives of others for over 30 years in nurse specialties including Intensive Care, Coronary Care, Medical-Surgical, Neurology, Pediatrics, Geriatrics, and Home Care. She was first elected to the State House of Representatives in 2012. In 2020 Rep. Cunningham was named Legislator of the Year by the North Carolina Association of Nurse Anesthetists. The same year, Novant Health awarded her the Special Recognition Award for Promoting Exemplary Service in Healthcare and Mental Health. In 2021 she received 3 additional awards: the Lifetime Mental Health Champion Award from Living Waters, Inc., Bayada Home Health Care 2021 North Carolina Legislator of the Year, and the Rep. Paul Luebke Legislative Champion of Mental Health Award at the 43rd Mental Health Legislative Breakfast. She has served as Co-Chair of the House Women Caucus and Co-Chair of the Democratic House Caucus Women's Issues Work Group. She was also elected by her colleagues to serve as one of the House Democratic Caucus Whips in the 2019-2020 session. Rep. Cunningham

champions causes important in the lives of North Carolinians by serving on the NC Council on Sickle Cell Syndrome, NC Minority Health Advisory Council and NC Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, as well as the NC Institute of medicine, Carolinas Pandemic Task Force. Carla Cunningham has dedicated her life to serving our friends and neighbors here in North Carolina and is an inspiration to us all.

Diamond Staton-Williams, RN, BSN, MHA, ACM, NE-BC – Running for House District 17

Diamond Staton-Williams is from Charlotte and has made her home in Harrisburg since 2008. She is currently the Director for Ambulatory Care Management at Carolinas Healthcare System. This is her first race for state-wide office. In addition to being a wife and mother of three, Diamond's many volunteer activities include Cabarrus County Ombudsman Program for Adult Care Homes, Cabarrus County Schools, NCNA Awards Committee and the YMCA as a Camp Nurse for Camp Thunderbird. In addition, she has served on the Board for Communities in Schools, Daymark, Pfeiffer Alumni Board, and the NC League of Municipalities. She is the current President of the Board of Trustees for the North Carolina Foundation for Nursing, NCNA's 501©(3) charitable arm. Staton-Williams was elected to the Harrisburg Town Council twice. Her goals are to increase access to healthcare – especially mental health care, increase broadband services in rural areas, strengthen education and support small businesses.

Donna McDowell White, RN – Running for House District 26

Rep. Donna White was selected to the NC House of Representatives in 2016 and re-elected three times by the citizens of House District 26. She is the first woman from Johnston County in this role. She is currently Co-Chair of both the Health Committee and the Appropriations for Health and Human Services Committee. Additionally, White is a Vice-Chair on Appropriations and a member of Education K-12, Environment, and Family Children and Aging Policy Committees. Rep. White has worked in public health, school health, pediatrics, and home health. She was the statewide Nurse Consultant for HIV/AIDS, Migrant Health and a consultant for home care and elder rights. In addition, she was the Nurse Consultant for a national Case Management Demonstration Project. She is a member of the North Carolina Nurses Association, the American Nurses Association, and Past President of the Johnston County Nurse Association. She was named one of the Great 100 Nurses in North Carolina. Her numerous honors include being named Legislator of the Year by Friends of Residents in Long Term Care in 2017 and 2019, Legislator of Excellence from the N.C. Police Benevolent Association (2017-2018), Legislator of the Year by the NC Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (2019), Legislator of the Year for the Children's Advocacy Center of North Carolina (2019) and named Legislator of the Year by NCNA (2018).

**The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the North Carolina Nurses Association or its board of directors.*