



NCOTA 2023 Fall Conference Speaker Biographies

Keynote Speaker - Ashley Perkinson

Ashley Perkinson is a lawyer and lobbyist who represents both statewide and national organizations at the North Carolina General Assembly. Ashley was recognized in 2021 by *North State Journal* as one of North Carolina's top 25 lobbyists. In 2011, Ashley was named by *Triangle Business Journal* as one of the Triangle's 40 Under 40. Ashley is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of UNC School of Journalism. She received her law degree from UNC in 2001. Ashley currently serves on the NC Symphony Foundation Board and Governor's School Foundation Board. She lives in Raleigh with her husband Sterling and daughters Tess and Margot.

A

Katie Arnold has been a registered occupational therapist for the past 13 years. She has worked in acute care, subacute care, industrial rehabilitation and other primary care settings. Currently, Katie is working in academia. Her research focus is on the role of OT related to perinatal loss. She is passionate about using her own lived experiences to support moms and families experiencing perinatal loss and to advocate for the need and ability for OT to emerge into this practice area.

B

Allison Baker, MS, OTR/L has been a practicing Occupational Therapist for 13 years. She graduated from San Jose State University's Masters in Occupational Therapy program. She works in the educational system, and enjoys collaboration + consultation on cases to support student success.

Hannah Barrett, MSOT, OTR/L, BCG. Hannah received her MSOT from Winston Salem State University in North Carolina in 2012. In 2019, Hannah earned board certification in Gerontology from AOTA. She has worked at the Durham VA Health Care System for the last 10 year and primarily practices in the ICU. Hannah is involved in Perioperative Optimization of Senior Health (POSH) clinic at the VA, which is an interdisciplinary clinic for medically fragile seniors who are scheduled for elective surgery. For the last five years, Hannah has been one of the primary mentors for the Geriatric Mental Health OT Fellowship at the Durham VA.

Dr. Marc Bartholdi received a BS in Occupational Therapy in 1997 from Keuka College. He then completed a hand therapy fellowship from Texas Woman's University in 1998 and became a Certified Hand Therapist (CHT) in 2003. Dr. Bartholdi received his Doctorate in Occupational Therapy with a concentration in Administration and Practice

Management in 2015 from Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions. He has established and managed hand therapy programs in a variety of settings including outpatient clinics, hospitals, physician-owned practices, and private practices. Dr. Bartholdi is an active member of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), American Hand Therapy Association (ASHT), North Carolina Occupational Therapy Association (NCOTA), and serves as a board member of the American Hand Therapy Foundation (AHTF), and the South Carolina Hand Therapy Association (SCHTA). He joined Pfeiffer University as an Assistant Professor in April 2021, in their master's in occupational therapy program.

S. Nicole Biggs Ayers, OTR/L, is currently completing her post-professional OT doctorate through Boston University. Her doctoral project is focused on addressing rural health needs through use of a mobile clinic. She graduated with a MSOT from East Carolina University in 2015, and has worked in a variety of community and hospital-based settings which serve rural residents across Eastern North Carolina.

Jessica Brown, OTR/L, CLT received her MSOT from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2012 and her CLT from Norton School of Lymphedema in 2017. She has predominantly practiced in the acute care and adult acute inpatient rehabilitation settings. She currently works in the Surgical and Trauma Intensive Care Unit at Duke University Hospital and is a mentor for their Acute & Critical Care Fellowship. She also works in the outpatient practice setting at the Duke ALS Clinic.

C

Dr. Megan Edwards Collins is a professor at WSSU (Winston-Salem State University) and has been in academia for the past 11 years. She has completed a year-long certificate course in teaching and program development through the Association of College and university educators (ACUE).

Kimberly Conrad is an Occupational Therapist and specializes within inpatient mental health for adolescents and adults. Kimberly is the clinical supervisor for mental health therapies at UNC Health in North Carolina. She also has a strong interest in education, serving as a fellowship mentor and adjunct faculty. Her research areas of interest include women's health, mental health, and improving collaboration within teams. Kimberly previous served on the board with NCOTA for 6 years as the Legal and Political Chair and now helps on the advocacy subcommittee for NCOTA. She has a strong passion for advocating for occupational therapy at the micro, meso, and macro level.

Thomas Curry received his MS in Occupational Therapy in 2022 from Pfeiffer University. Thomas as a new graduate currently works in an orthopedic hand therapy setting at Ivy Rehab. Thomas is an active member of American Occupational Therapy Association, American Hand Therapy Association (ASHT), and the North Carolina Occupational Therapy Association (NCOTA).

D

Reeti Douglas is an Assistant Professor and Doctoral Capstone Coordinator at Wingate University. She advises the Wingate COTAD Chapter and is a member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee of the NCOTA.

Cathy Driscoll MS, OTR/L currently works at UNC Rex Holly Springs Hospital, and has 18 years of experience in adult physical rehabilitation in many settings including SNF, ALF, memory care, CCRCs.

F

Charity Faragoi is a Certified and licensed Occupational Therapy Assistant working in Pediatrics. She received her B.S. in Exercise and Sport Science from Campbell University in 2017. Then went on to earn an Associates of Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant from South College, Asheville campus in 2019. Prior to occupational therapy, Charity served in the United States Air Force. Charity has always been passionate about health and wellness. She has been licensed and certified to instruct Zumba, Zumbatomic, and Les Mills Body Pump. She is currently a Certified Personal Trainer, health coach, and amateur fitness competitor. She currently serves on the NCOTA board, as the Continuing Education Co-Chair. She also serves AOTA on the Volunteer Leadership Development Committee as the OTA representative.

Alyssa Farrell, MS OTR/L is an assistant professor at St. Catherine University in the Occupational Therapy Assistant program and currently serves as the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. Alyssa has practiced in a variety of clinical settings, including acute rehab, outpatient pediatrics, subacute rehab as well as a specialization in rehabilitation in acute care ICUs. Alyssa's is passionate about educating OT practitioners in academia about compassion fatigue as well as clinicians in the field who hold the role of Fieldwork Educator. Other scholarship interests include development of OTA Leaders and the role that Emotional Intelligence has on leadership and student success.

Kayleigh Fessenden is currently an occupational therapy instructor at Cabarrus College of Health Sciences instructing courses on development, mental health, adult intervention and therapeutic modalities as well as serving as a capstone advisor. She has been an occupational therapist for 12 years working in both the inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation environment specializing in hip fractures, amputations, fall prevention and balance. Kayleigh designed and led a joint commission accredited hip fracture program in the inpatient rehabilitation environment, as well as played the role of Student Fieldwork Coordinator. Prior to switching to academia, she held the role of Director of Rehabilitation for an outpatient clinic in an assisted living facility that included a memory care unit. Kayleigh is originally from South Florida and relocated to North Carolina. She enjoys spending time with her dogs, running, doing yoga, traveling and spoiling her nieces and nephews.

Dr. Valerie Fox is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she received her Master's degree and PhD in Occupational Science. She also completed the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Fellowship at the Durham Veterans Affairs Healthcare Center, which focused on recovery-based mental health services for Veterans. Valerie currently works as an occupational therapist at the Durham VA; she leads a transitional behavioral activation program for Veterans with depression, anxiety, PTSD, and/or who feel "stuck". She is an avid OT advocate and fully believes in the power of occupation to enhance function, quality of life, and wellness. Thus, she enjoys program development, expanding OT services in needed areas, continuing to progress the profession, and mentoring students in occupation-based practice.

G

Peyton Gemmell is a second year occupational therapy doctorate student in Duke University's School of Medicine. She grew up in Wake Forest, NC and got her bachelors degrees in Exercise and Sport Science and Human Development and Disabilities Studies from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. While at UNC, she balanced leadership in her college ministry, working as a caregiver, and involvement in community mentorship and accessibility projects. She is interested in many areas of occupational therapy, including community-based, mental health, and pediatrics. Additionally, she has a vision for the expansion of occupational therapy services to include the needs of adults with ADHD. During her time at Duke, she has served as student representative for her cohort,

acting as a liaison between her classmates and the faculty. She is excited to be a part of the field of occupational therapy and passionate about occupational justice.

Clarice Grote, MS, OTR/L, is an occupational therapist, Medicare specialist, health policy consultant, host of the Amplify OT Podcast, and the Founder and CEO of Amplify OT and the Amplify OT Membership. Amplify OT is dedicated to promoting the profession of occupational therapy and its practitioners through education on health policy, quality, and advocacy. Clarice currently serves as an American Occupational Therapy Political Action Committee (AOTPAC) Ambassador for North Carolina and the North Carolina OT Association Advocacy Co-Chair. Clarice can be reached at www.amplifyot.com or cgrote@amplifyot.com. She can be found on social media @amplify_ot

H

Theresa Hallenen is an experienced occupational therapist and educator. As a certified hand therapist, Theresa specializes in outpatient orthopedic upper extremity with a sub-specialty in complex peripheral nerve injuries. She is a co-director of the Duke University Hand Therapy Fellowship. Theresa has worked as adjunct faculty and provided instructional support to the Duke University OTD program. As a clinician, Theresa recognizes the nuances within client interactions. Theresa began to research health literacy and accessibility to improve how she shares information with clients. She and Jasmine Campbell (Duke OTDs, class of 2024) presented this conference presentation to the Duke Rehabilitation Services Department's monthly Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion meeting in May 2023.

Brittany Hawley MSOT, OTR/L, ATP is an Assistive Technologist with the North Carolina Assistive Technology Program. She has been with the North Carolina Assistive Technology Program since 2021. Brittany has a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Campbell University. She has a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy from Clarkson University. Brittany has experience with pediatrics and transition.

Lauren Hew, OTR/L earned a degree in Psychology from the University of Central Florida, and graduated with her Master's in Occupational Therapy from the University of Florida in 2015. Throughout her OT career, she has gained knowledge and applied skills at 2 large teaching hospitals, and her OT background is founded in a variety of units including general medicine, medical intermediate and intensive care units, cardiology, and burns. She has previously worked as a teaching assistant/lab instructor for both a NeuroAnatomy and a Musculoskeletal Anatomy lab, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and finds passion in a balance of clinical care and academia. In 2021, Lauren completed a year-long Acute and Critical Care OT fellowship at Duke University Hospital, where she rotated through 5 ICUs: neurology, cardiac, medical, surgical, and cardiothoracic. She currently serves as primary OT in Duke's 30+ bed Medical ICU and serves as 1 of 5 mentors for Duke's Acute and Critical Care OT fellowship.

Raven Y. Hill MOT, OTR/L is a graduate of Governors State University in University Park, IL and has been a skilled occupational therapist since 2020. In 2022-2023, Raven completed the Acute & Critical Care Occupational Therapy Fellowship Program at Duke University Medical Center and has since developed a deep interest in understanding health disparities and culturally sensitive practices as it relates to the critically ill patient.

Krista Hodges, OTR/L, CBIS, CSRS, has been an occupational therapist for 5 years, specializing in neurological populations. She obtained her Certified Brain Injury Specialist certification in 2020 and her Certified Stroke Rehabilitation Specialist certification in 2022. She has been a vision specialist at Carolinas Rehabilitation working with inpatients since 2018. She has experience in creating vision programs at Inpatient and Outpatient rehab facilities. She enjoys teaching practitioners and empowering them to feel confident treating complex visual impairments.

Anna Housman is a North Carolina native, originally from Winston-Salem. From a young age she always knew she wanted to work with children. During her junior year of high school her mother mentioned some of the job openings posted at the local hospital for speech-language pathologists. After reading the job descriptions, Anna knew there was no other profession for her. She completed her undergraduate degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders at UNC-Greensboro in 2011 before moving on to complete her graduate degree in Speech-Language Pathology at UNC-Chapel Hill in 2013. Prior to joining Emerge, Anna worked in both Durham and Wake County Public Schools with students ranging from kindergarten to high school in mainstream and self-contained classrooms. During this time she worked largely with, and discovered her passion for, working with children on the Autism Spectrum. One of Anna's favorite parts about working at Emerge is the collaboration that happens across disciplines. Over the years Anna has developed a strong interest in and love for incorporating dynamic sensory information into her sessions. 2019 Anna became an affiliate clinical instructor for the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill – giving a lecture titled “Inter-Professional Collaboration and a Sensory Approach to Speech-Language Therapy.”

I

Dr. Chinno Ingram is a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy at Winston-Salem State University. He has integrated 3D printing modules into several courses across the curriculum at WSSU. Dr. Ingram has over 10 years of experience with providing occupational therapy services. Currently, he is a member of AOTA, NBOTC, NCOTA, and a board member with the National Society of Allied Health. Dr. Ingram has presented and provided 3D printing training modules for OT programs internationally, nationally, and locally. He recently co-authored a manuscript titled “Interprofessional learning through 3D printing of assistive devices”.

J

Dr. Khalilah R. Johnson is an assistant professor in the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, Department of Health Sciences, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and an affiliate research associate in the Center for Cultural Experiences in Prevention, Department of Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University. She has 17 years of clinical experience spanning Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia in acute care, inpatient rehabilitation, home health and community services. Dr. Johnson's program of research intersects intellectual and developmental disabilities, health equity, anti-racism, and disability justice. Her research has been featured in the Journal of Occupational Science, the American Journal of Occupational Therapy, the Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, Autism in Adulthood, and Inclusion to name a few. She is an Associate Editor with the American Journal of Occupational Therapy and sits on the editorial board of Autism in Adulthood. Additionally, Dr. Johnson serves on the Scientific Advisory Council for the American Occupational Therapy Foundation and the leadership team of the Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity.

Heather “Beth” Johnson has been a registered occupational therapist for the last 16 years. She recently obtained her Post Professional Occupational Therapy Doctorate. Her practice areas included skilled nursing and academia.

Her capstone project topic was Coping with Compassion Fatigue as an OT practitioner. Beth is passionate about educating OT practitioners in academia about how to cope with the compassion fatigue they may experience in their role in higher level education programs.

Tajze Johnson is currently a Doctor of Occupational Therapy student at Methodist University. He recently graduated as an Occupational Therapy Assistant student from Eastern Virginia Career College. Before that, he received his master's degree in healthcare administration from Purdue University. He also received a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies with a minor in Business Management and a concentration in Entrepreneurship. He has a breadth of experience from many years working with young children ranging from school to young adults. Before attending the Eastern Virginia Career College OTA program, Tajze was a residential counselor for at-risk youth. After completing pediatric fieldwork placement, Tajze knew he wanted to devote his career to working children and their families. Tajze is excited to continue to grow my knowledge and work towards my goal of providing care to underserved clients. He is enthusiastic about advocating and improving others' lives for the rest of my career. Everyone deserves access to quality occupational therapy services, and he hopes to ensure that underserved populations in my community are not forgotten. Tajze enjoys time with his fiancé, family, and friends, sports, working out, and traveling in his spare time. Tajze also enjoys bringing sports rehabilitation into his therapy sessions.

K

Melissa Kandel, OTR/L - BCPR is a 1996 Graduate of Indiana University School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Occupational Therapy program. She has 26 years of experience as an OT in a variety of settings including acute care, subacute care, outpatient, pediatrics and home health care. She has been with Duke University since 2007 as a Clinical Services Coordinator in the Acute Division of the Department of Physical and Occupational Therapy supervising a team of OTs who provide hospital-wide services. Melissa participates in research projects regarding the impact of intensive rehabilitation on patients with congestive heart failure in REHAB-HF and with the BETTER study to research how to best support patients with a traumatic brain injury in their transition back to the community. She worked to establish the Acute and Critical Care OT Fellowship through AOTA in 2015. Melissa also serves as a member of the AOTA Roster of Fellowship Reviewers since 2017.

Taz Kang is a registered and licensed Occupational Therapist who received his Master's of Science Degree in Occupational Therapy in 2013 from the University of Southern Indiana. Occupational Therapy is a second career for Taz. He previously worked as a 3D Graphics Designer for a Fortune 500 Marketing company and has a Bachelor of Science degree from Purdue University in Computer Graphics Animation and Technology. He continues to work as a portrait photographer for an artistic outlet. An OT with 10 years of experience, he has primarily worked with the pediatric population. He has worked extensively with children and young adults diagnosed with intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, developmental delay, and autism in outpatient rehab clinics during his time in New York City and North Carolina. Three years ago Taz was selected as the North Carolina Ambassador for NBCOT. He has represented North Carolina in national meetings and is working to strengthen the relationship between NBCOT and its stakeholder groups who are the students, candidates, certificants, regulators, educators, and professional leaders of North Carolina.

Melissa Keith is an occupational therapist at Duke University Hospital in Durham, NC. She works primarily with the cardiothoracic surgery population and has recently initiated program development to expand occupational and physical therapy's roles as members of the multidisciplinary palliative care team in the acute care setting.

Brenda Kennell has been an OT for over 40 years, working in a multitude of settings and with clients of all ages. She served on the AOTA Ethics Commission for 6 years, and is currently editing a new textbook on ethics for AOTA Press. Brenda has published and presented locally and nationally about ethical concerns and justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Advocating for her clients and families and providing ethical care is a priority at all times.

Christey Kirk, COTA and ATP is an Assistive Technologist with the North Carolina Assistive Technology Program. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Lenoir-Rhyne University in Human Occupational Studies with a minor in Psychology as well as an Associate of Science degree from Central Piedmont Community College in Occupational Therapy Assistant. She has worked for the North Carolina Assistive Technology Program since August of 2020. She has an occupational therapy background working with the aging population in skilled nursing facilities and home health.

Madison Kolotello is an occupational therapist with one year of experience currently working in an assisted living facility in Charlotte, NC. Madison is certified in the Montreal Cognitive Assessment, the LSVT Big Protocol, a Certified Dementia Practitioner, a Certified Geriatric Care Specialist, and a Recreational Therapist.

L

Megan Lockette (she/her/hers) has been a COTA/L since 2019. She completed her OTA degree at Cayuga Community College in NY. She went on to pursue her Bachelor's degree in Community and Human Services in 2022 from Empire State College. She has served as a school-based OTA in NC for 4 years and works part-time in a local outpatient pediatric clinic. She is passionate about leadership and advocacy. Megan strives to make sure everyone knows and understands our profession and that it continues to thrive. Most recently Megan served as the co-chair for the NCOTA Children and Youth SIS (2021-2023). Her clinical interests are focusing on trauma informed care in the school setting and promoting mental health in the school environment.

M

Amy Mahle is an occupational therapy assistant with over 16 years' experience. She is the founding program chair of the OTA Program at Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, an author, and a strong advocate for the occupational therapy profession. She has served in numerous leadership roles in the profession at the state and national levels and currently serves as an AOTA Board Director. She earned her Doctor of Education, Community College Leadership, from NC State University in May 2023.

Seth Mitchell is a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. His research interests are concerned with how communities engage in occupations together, the occupations of activism, and queer justice.

O

Yolanda Ortiz received her undergraduate degree from the University of Tennessee - Knoxville in Journalism and Electronic Media and received her OTA degree from Durham Tech Community College. Prior to working as an OTA, she worked for a bar entertainment company as a Marketing Assistant and she worked for the Durham Visitors Bureau as a Creative Services Assistant. During her OTA career she worked primarily with older adults in skilled nursing and adults with neurological conditions in acute care. Prior to making her non-clinical transition, she managed a local paralysis center that offered Activity-Based Training for individuals with spinal cord injury, stroke

and other neurological disorders. Currently she works as the Training and Operations Coordinator for Progressive GaitWays, a pediatric therapy continuing education provider and creator of the TheraTogs strapping system.

P

As a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Becky Parkin is interested in how constructs of race, including whiteness, are learned and reinforced through personal and community-based occupations. Further, she is interested in how racialization and structures of racism impact health and wellbeing and hopes to disrupt the normalization of racialized social inequities in society.

Ali Pedrick is a recent graduate from the post-professional occupational therapy doctoral program at the Medical University of South Carolina. She has been practicing for 9 years in the Upstate region of South Carolina, primarily in home health. She is passionate about improving clinician education on neurodiversity and the needs of neuro-minorities. She is a member of the Alliance for Disability in Health Care Education and serves on the South Carolina Occupational Therapy Association Board. She recently joined the Board of Directors for Trailhead Community Farm School, a therapeutic and academic program for neurodivergent middle and high school students.

Q

Erin Quicker received her MS in Occupational Therapy in 2018 from Mary Baldwin University. She then went on to receive her CHT in 2021. Erin has worked in a variety of settings including skilled nursing facilities, in patient rehab, and finally in a orthopedic hand therapy setting at Ivy Rehab. Erin is an active member of American Occupational Therapy Association, American Hand Therapy Association (ASHT), and the North Carolina Occupational Therapy Association (NCOTA).

R

Brittany Rudd has worked in the adult acute and inpatient rehabilitation settings since 2019 primarily with oncology, stroke, & non traumatic brain injury patient populations. Brittany serves as the vision champion at Carolinas Rehabilitation—Charlotte and leads a competency for fellow practitioners to execute comprehensive vision evaluations. Brittany holds regular in-services and presentations to improve departmental comfort & confidence treating patients with visual deficits. Brittany has presented on vision in the inpatient department, brain injury inpatient rehab team, and greater Charlotte area.

S

Shara Scher OTR/L, BCPR, CLT has been a practicing occupational therapist for 20 years, and a CLT for 11. She has predominantly practiced in the areas of hospital based, acute care as well as inpatient acute rehabilitation with both adults and children. She has a professional interest in the role of the occupational therapist in the oncology spectrum of care as well as patient advocacy within the hospital environment. She serves as a mentor to new staff, new fieldwork educators. In her current role, she floats to all units at Duke University Hospital.

Dr. Sanchala Sen is an assistant professor at WSSU (Winston Salem State University) and has been in academia for the past 15 years. She has completed a year-long certificate course in teaching and program development through the Association of college and university educators (ACUE).

Carol Siebert, OTD, OT/L, FAOTA, has been an OT for 35 years, all of them practiced in home-based service delivery. She has worked with adults who have diabetes in both home health and home-based primary care throughout her career, with a focus on diabetes self-management for the past ten years. She has taught students and practicing therapists to understand and evaluate their setting both in OT entry-level programs, state, and national OT conferences, and in publications for over 20 years. She has been recognized for helping students and practitioners to understand and leverage the relationships between policy and practice. Carol has represented OT and AOTA on committees, task forces and expert panels at Joint Commission, the PCPI, National Quality Forum, and CMS. She is a past NCOTA president and past recipient of the NCOTA Nova, Alvarez, and Scullin Awards. Carol has been recognized as a national expert on the role of OT in chronic disease management, gerontological OT practice, and home-based OT service delivery.

Dr. Amy M. Siegler is the owner and operator of LimbTech (An accessibility clinic) in multiple states which heavily focus' on telehealth and bringing OT to rural communities. She graduated from Creighton University OTD program in 2012. She is an NCOTA board member and fierce advocate for accessibility, advocacy, and rural healthcare. She lives in Hendersonville with her twin daughters, step-daughter, and husband.

Jennifer Smith is currently the academic fieldwork coordinator and an instructor at Cabarrus College of Health Sciences facilitating level 1 and 2 fieldwork placements as well as serving as a capstone advisor and assisting in courses in mental health and adult assessment and intervention. She has been an occupational therapist for 8 years and worked clinically in acute care settings primarily specializing in adult oncology. Jennifer spent several years working as a fieldwork educator as well as serving as the OT site coordinator for clinical education. Jennifer is originally from Columbus Ohio and recently relocated to North Carolina. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, running and taking walks with her dog.

Sherry Stancliff has over 35 years of experience providing services within occupational therapy in the adult continuum and school-based practice. In 2019, she received her postgraduate doctorate from Chatham University and has taught for the last six years at Rowan-Cabarrus Community College in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program. She received the Rowan-Cabarrus 2022 Excellence in Teaching Award and was a State-Finalist for the State Excellence in Teaching Award in 2023.

T

Dr. Peggy Terhune has served as President/CEO of Monarch since 1995. In a career spanning more than 50 years, Peggy has worked in multiple settings as an occupational therapist and organization leader. During her tenure at Monarch, Peggy has grown the company significantly, focused on giving individuals with disabilities joy and respect. Peggy also works as an Adjunct Professor at both Duke and Wingate in the Occupational Doctorate programs. Peggy holds a BS degree in Occupational Therapy from Indiana University, an MBA from RIT and a Ph.D. from The UNC Greensboro. In addition to her career, Peggy is mother to seven adult children, two of whom were adopted as teenagers. Several of her children have disabilities. She also serves as an adjunct at Wingate University and Duke University.

Ben Triplett began his career as an Occupational Therapist in 2016 working at UNC hospital on inpatient mental health units with Crisis, Maternal Mental Health, and Psychotic disorder populations. Ben then moved to the Durham VA to join the Homeless program with a focus on community mental health and support for housing stability. Ben currently serves as Coordinator of the Geriatric Mental Health OT Fellowship at the Durham VA and

also works on inpatient mental health units at the Durham VA. Ben has served on local and national VA committees addressing older adult ambulatory care, dementia initiatives, and racial equity, and has interests in the intersection of philosophy and occupational therapy with a focus on mental health.

W

Linn Wakeford is an Associate Professor at UNC-Chapel Hill and serves as the Admissions Coordinator there. She also is a clinical educator with the LEND program at UNC, and a member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee of the NCOTA.

Amber Ward is an OT practitioner with almost 30 years of experience. She currently works with clients with progressive disorders and as a wheelchair seating specialist as well as an adjunct professor at Cabarrus College of Health Sciences. She has published articles and books and has presented locally to internationally on a wide array of topics. She is passionate about advocacy and occupation in all its forms and can be found in the garden or with a good book when not working.

Brittini Winslow received her Masters in Occupational Therapy from East Carolina University in 2011 and has been working in pediatric practice ever since. She is currently the Executive Director and owner of Emerge Pediatric Therapy, a growing practice in the Triangle with occupational, speech and physical therapy. In clinical practice, 3 Brittini has a strong passion for working with children with needs in sensory processing, emotional regulation, executive function, social skills and promoting positive self concept. Her passion in those areas has informed how she leads within her company, and how she builds into her team.

Tiffany Wright currently works in skilled nursing specializing in dementia care. She has been an occupational therapy assistant for 10 years with experience working in acute care, skilled nursing, and outpatient adults/pediatrics. Tiffany has served as a clinical education coordinator for OT, PT, and ST in outpatient and acute care. Tiffany is a 2nd year student at Cabarrus College of Health Sciences where she will complete a master's in occupational therapy in August 2024. In 2015, Tiffany founded non-profit Wright State of Mind, with the mission to provide education, support, and care to those affected by dementia. Tiffany is a North Carolina native. She enjoys dancing, spending time with her family & friends, traveling, and being a dog mom and aunt.

Z

Cathy Zanowski is an OT with 40+ years of experience in a variety of settings with a special focus on the mental health aspects of every client we treat. She is a strong advocate for re-gaining roles for OT Practitioners in Mental Health settings and in emerging practice areas like with the homeless, at-risk youth, victims of domestic violence and post-partum depression, just to name a few. Her presentations always include take-aways that can be immediately used in the various treatment areas. Cathy currently serves as an adjunct in the OTA Program at Rowan Cabarrus Community College.