

NC Chamber

84th Annual Leadership Dinner & Awards

MARCH 26, 2026 | CARY, NC

Paul J. Cozza

Paul J. Cozza started his professional career in the U.S. Army. He graduated from the United States Military Academy with a degree in Aerospace Engineering. After graduating, he became a helicopter pilot, qualified on multiple Army aircraft, and commanded an Air Cavalry Platoon early in his career. After completing his military service, Cozza decided to move to the private sector.



Cozza first landed a job with AT&T, who sponsored his master's in business administration. Not totally satisfied with the challenges he was receiving, a career-changing call came from a recruiter and Cozza landed a job with CSX Corporation.

At the time, CSX owned Sea-Land Service, the world leader in global transportation, where Cozza gained experience in finance, business planning, operations, marketing, and sales. He traveled throughout the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Cozza continued his career at various logistics companies, relocating with his family to multiple states. Each opportunity brought increasing responsibility culminating with a CEO position with a privately held Canadian global supply chain company.

In April 2014, Cozza was called back to North Carolina to be executive director of the North Carolina State Ports Authority. Under Cozza's leadership, N.C. Ports set new records in volume growth and profits each year. In the six years of Cozza's leadership, the organization had combined profits that exceeded the total profit generation from the preceding 50 years.

Cozza now serves as a board member with privately held firms, teaches supply chain management at UNC Wilmington, and coaches retiring senior military personnel as they leave service. He has been married for 38 years and has two grown daughters. He enjoys traveling and spending time outdoors hiking with his wife as often as possible.