

WOMEN LEAD NC

DECEMBER 2, 2026 | RALEIGH, NC



Kris Carroll
President
Grady-White Boats

Kris Carroll came up through the ranks at Grady-White Boats, starting as a production control clerk in 1975 and eventually was promoted to vice-president of engineering and manufacturing in the late 80's. In 1993, Kris was promoted to president of Grady-White Boats. She was the first woman to hold this position in the U.S. boat manufacturing industry.

Kris has led Grady-White to the top of the industry through her steadfast belief in putting the customer first, and through building a great leadership team. Under her guidance, Grady-White's mission of customer satisfaction is achieved through building one-to-one customer relationships. This commitment to the consumer is proven by the fact that Grady-White has been ranked at the top of customer satisfaction surveys in every third-party measure ever done in its respective categories; this includes every top award from the National Marine Manufacturer's Association (NMMA) since the inception of its Customer Satisfaction Award program in 2003, as well as the highest satisfaction rankings in every marine study done by J.D. Power and Associates.



Kris and her top leaders consistently demonstrate their belief in team-building within the Grady-White organization of employees, dealerships and vendors. They relentlessly encourage the achievement of the company's vision "Together, delivering the ultimate boating experience, while fully enjoying our workdays". With a deep dedication to helping each person develop their individual potential, Kris created and continues to promote the Grady-White reading program for all employees, where team members are paid to read books for personal growth in all areas of life. This has built a committed culture with common values--everyone knows the meaning of Win-Win at Grady-White and takes responsibility for everything in their lives.

Carroll holds active leadership roles in the industry and her community; she is currently serving on the Board of Directors for the NMMA and on the Board of Directors for the North Carolina Chamber of Commerce. She has served on the Advisory Council (and Board of Directors) of the Boat Owners' Association of the United States (Boat US), the Board of the Center for Sportfishing Policy (formerly the Center for Coastal Conservation), and is the past chairwoman of the NMMA Boat Manufacturers' Division Board.

In the industry, Kris has received the MRAA's (Marine Retailer's Association of the Americas) 2002 Darlene Briggs Woman of the Year Award. The recipient of the Briggs award demonstrates leadership and commitment to the boating business as well as a willingness to volunteer their time and effort in their communities and social organizations. She has also been celebrated by the Center for Sportfishing Policy with the 2012 Eddie Smith Manufacturer of the Year Award for her dedication to conservation efforts and service to the organization and the Board. She also received the NMMA's 2018 Hammond Marine Leadership Award, created to recognize individuals who have helped grow and protect the marine industry through advocacy and dedication to the long-term health of recreational boating, benefiting the entire marine industry, distinct from helping one's own company. Most recently, Kris was inducted in the NMMA's Hall of Fame, the first woman ever to be recognized with this esteemed award. This Hall of Fame was established in 1988 to honor and recognize individuals who have made or continue to make substantial contributions toward the advancement of the marine industry. It is NMMA's most prestigious recognition.

At home, Kris has served on the Board of Directors of the Pitt-Greenville Chamber of Commerce. She is also a former board member of Pitt County United Way, and provided leadership for many community outreach programs including STRIVE and VISIONS, as well as speaking often to outside groups like the Teacher's Executive Institute, Pitt Community College, and East Carolina University. She has a heart to help those who struggle and personally contributes to numerous initiatives for those in need in her community and is a mentor to many people.

Kris's ability to assemble and inspire the best people, her steadfast beliefs, and her hard work continue to set an example for her community and the entire marine industry, as well as her two daughters.