WOMEN LEAD NC

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Debra Derr
Senior Director of Government Affairs
NC Chamber



Debra L. Derr's career trajectory is a testament to her readiness to seize opportunities and her diverse skill set. She attributes her success to being in the right place at the right time — and her willingness to take a chance on herself.

Derr's early career in radio announcing and later as a television producer and writer provided a strong foundation for her shift into public relations and government affairs. While at SCETV in Columbia, South Carolina, she was awarded a Corporation for Public Broadcasting scholarship to study documentary film production at the Maine Media Workshops in Rockport, Maine. Her experience even extended to demonstrating effective communication, as evidenced by her "one-minute speeches" while serving as a congressional press secretary.

Debra was a founding member and public affairs director of the Wake County Commission on Women. Her influence grew significantly during her time with BellSouth, where she consistently appeared on the Top 50 Most Influential Lobbyists list. She was also part of the team of lobbyists instrumental in bringing video competition to North Carolina.

Currently, as a member of the NC Chamber's government affairs team, she is responsible for policies related to child care, education, talent supply, unemployment insurance, and housing. Her past roles include serving as chief deputy secretary for the NC Department of Cultural Resources and as a partner in Market Solutions, LLC.

Debra's contributions have been recognized with a 2010 Women of Achievement Award from the General Federation of Women's Club. She is also a graduate of the Business Leads Fellow program for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, which focuses on developing business leaders as education and workforce champions.

She holds a cum laude bachelor's degree in mass communications from Norfolk State University and is a graduate of the Public Affairs Institute. Demonstrating her continued commitment to community and workforce development, Debra is a member of the U.S. Chamber Foundation Early Childhood & Business Advisory Council and serves on the advisory councils of ApprenticeshipNC, NC Workforce Credentials, and the Public School Forum of NC.