



Women's Issues:

A dialogue of the past, the present, and empowering the future



Speaker Bios

Ruth Steidinger

Ruth Steidinger, EdD, is a leader committed to developing and supporting effective teachers and successful students. She began her career in Wake County as a high school math teacher earning honors for her performance during her first year of teaching. She served as assistant principal and principal in two public schools and moved to Central Office in 2003 where she served in various positions. Some of her accomplishments during her tenure include leading the development of the system's Reading and Writing Model, Mastery Learning Model, Curriculum Design, Effective Teaching Framework, and revised Grading Practices/Policy. In September of 2015, Dr. Steidinger decided it was time to return to where she believed she could make the greatest impact, as a principal. The opportunity to come to Olive Chapel was presented to her and she jumped at the chance.

Dr. Steidinger grew up in Greensboro, NC, and studied at three fine North Carolina institutions—Meredith College (BA, *magna cum laude*, math and graphic design), NC Central University (MA, *summa cum laude*, Education Administration and Supervision), and East Carolina University (EdD, *summa cum laude*, Educational Leadership) where she received the Mack and Margaret Coble Doctoral Fellowship recognizing her leadership within the program.

One of Dr. Steidinger's other passions is the development of leaders through coaching, speaking, and training. In 2006 she obtained her coaching certification from the John Maxwell Team. In addition to her work as a principal, she serves leaders aspiring to develop into their greatest potential through her consulting business, Steidinger Consulting.

Dr. Steidinger is driven by her purpose to live intentionally and to work tirelessly every day to serve those she works with: staff, students, parents, and her school community. One of her core beliefs is that people deserve the opportunity to become the very best version of themselves. She is intentional in her efforts to help those she serves along this journey. Her leadership has been recognized in being chosen as Wake County's Principal of the Year in 2019 and the North Central Regional Principal of the Year in 2020.

Barbara Collins

Barbara Collins and her husband, Dan Sigmon, are 26-year residents of Apex. They have two children and four grandchildren living in the area.

Recently retired after 20 years with Duke University, for the last 15 years Barbara focused on strategic planning, organizational development and funding for 20+ pan-university institutes and programs prioritized by the president and provost. Along with her colleagues at Johns Hopkins, Michigan, MIT, Northwestern and Stanford, she founded this Strategic Initiatives field of work. Barbara imagined herself an entrepreneur within academia and wrote about and spoke at national conferences related to brain sciences, diversity, energy, ethics and capital project funding, among others topics. She served on the committee that developed the first flex-time policy at Duke.

Barbara is an amateur fiction writer, Comic Con attendee and volunteer, avid kayaker and she spends time furthering social justice causes and hanging out with their grandkids.

Kathleen Roblez

Kat Roblez is a graduate of Harvard Law, and she currently works as a Staff Attorney at Forward Justice, a non-profit in Durham that is dedicated to racial and social justice in the South. Kat principally works on democracy advocacy and voting rights litigation in North Carolina courts. She lives in Apex with her husband and two children, ages 4 and 7.

Emmie Hix

Emmie Hix is new to Apex, moving in this last summer, although she's been in the Triangle since the winter of 2015. An avid writer, reader, and self-proclaimed geek, she spends most of her downtime writing her next novel alongside her girlfriend (who is also a writer), trying out new recipes, and playing Barbies with her two young daughters. When choosing a home in 2020, Emmie looked into Apex for the supportive community she found for queer people, especially parents. Emmie works for a local church in administration, and once the pandemic calms down and she is vaccinated, she can't wait to return to nights out at local breweries with friends and meetings with community organizers for the lgbtqia+ community and local politics.

Audra Killingsworth

Audra Killingsworth is married to Matthew Killingsworth. They have 4 children ranging from elementary to college age. They also have a cocker spaniel, a bearded dragon, and 2 ferrets.

Audra was elected to Apex's Town Council in 2017 for a 4 year term and is running for re-election.

Audra is a member of TFS, AHA, CAPRac, Town of Apex Finance Committee, and the Wake County Community Health Needs Assessment. She volunteers at the Board of Directors for Western Wake Crisis Ministries, Food bank, Human Beans, Habitat for Humanity, The Women's Center and Think Apex.

Audra has a BS in Occupational Therapy, is a certified dementia practitioner and is currently an Occupational Therapist at Galberth Health. She has been an Occupational Therapist for 15 years and has been treating people in such specialties as dementia, pelvic floor dysfunction, lymphedema, and orthopedics.

Nicole Dozier

Nicole Dozier is a 24-year veteran of the North Carolina Justice Center and is the Director of the Health Advocacy Project working statewide using policy advocacy, community and partner engagement and communications strategies to push for quality, affordable, equitable health care. Nicole alongside her committed colleagues keep people who are directly impacted as the centerpiece, defending against threats to coverage, implementation and access.

Nicole has been an elected official since 2013, serving in her second term as the Mayor Pro Tempore of the Apex Town Council where she launched the Think APEX initiative—including community awards, service and other events, championed the addition of a Senior Community Center, supported the Skate Plaza, spearheaded the first Black History Month and Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration, pushed for an Affordable Housing Initiative, is founding chair of the environmental committee, and chair of the personnel committee (championing paid parental, caregiver and bereavement leaves, expanding the definition of family under FMLA, living wage).

Nicole's recent recognition includes: White House Consumer Health Leader Participant, one of Cary Magazine's Women of Western Wake, the Apex Gazette Woman of the Year, NC State Farm Apex's ReMarkable Award recipient, National Coalition of 100 Black Women Policy Award and NC AIDS Action Network Advocate of the Year. Nicole is a Tarheel, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in Industrial Relations with Sociology concentration from UNC - Chapel Hill in 1988 where she also pledged Delta Sigma Theta in 1987 and is featured in UNC Chapel Hill's online Women with Moxie Oral History Project.

Nicole has been a NC State Bar certified paralegal for over 15 years and has been active for 23 years with the NC Advocates for Justice who named her Disability Advocacy Section Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient in 2012. Over the years, Nicole has served on numerous committees and boards aimed at improving quality of life for North Carolinians and is currently active with the NC Council of Churches governing board, the NC Black Alliance (of elected officials) and NC Black Elected Municipal Officials.