



Window washers, Wells Fargo Tower.

## Every crisis call in Greensboro and Guilford goes to Guilford Metro 9-1-1

Something unusual happened recently at Guilford Metro 9-1-1. A hand-addressed pink envelope arrived in the mail. Inside was a thank-you note from a grateful grandmother, directed to “the most kind dispatcher who took my call.”

“My grandson was having difficulty breathing,” the note read. “You kept me calm and focused on what needed to be done. You were amazing. You have a gentle tone, a caring tone, knowledgeable, and are an overall wonderful 9-1-1 operator. Thank you for all you do.”

The envelope came to the desk of Guilford Metro 9-1-1 Executive Director Melanie Neal. Using the time and date mentioned in the note, she was able to determine which staffer took the call. Neal would make sure the note got to the staffer when she began her next shift.

“We rarely get that,” Neal said, “and that means a lot – to know that you made a difference. And that’s the kind of difference we want to make.”



One of the call-takers on duty at Metro 9-1-1’s operations center near the Greensboro Coliseum.

**‘We help deliver babies by phone. It’s the greatest thing in the world when you hear that baby cry.’**

– **Melanie Neal**  
Executive Director, Guilford Metro 9-1-1



Executive Director Melanie Neal leads a staff of more than 90 employees.

All 9-1-1 calls made by Greensboro and Guilford County residents are answered at the Guilford Metro 9-1-1 operations center near the Greensboro Coliseum. High Point has its own 9-1-1 system.

Last year, Guilford Metro 9-1-1 emergency communi-

cations specialists fielded an average of 926 calls a day. That’s over 337,000 calls from people reporting car accidents, house fires, and crimes. Other calls come from suicidal individuals or those facing a medical emergency, such as childbirth.

Last year the agency was credited with saving 33 lives.

Neal, a former deputy sheriff who shifted to taking 9-1-1 calls when she had young children, has personally taken every kind of call.

“We help deliver babies

by phone,” she says. “It’s the greatest thing in the world when you hear that baby cry.”

Neal has worked in public safety for more than 30 years. She was with the Guilford County 9-1-1 operations center when it consolidated with Greensboro’s in 2007. She became Guilford Metro 9-1-1’s executive director in 2015.

Fielding 9-1-1 calls is a stressful job that exacts a toll over time. Neal has had crackjack call-takers resign after less than six months on the job. So many, she says, just can’t keep taking the mental trauma day after day. “It takes a special person to deal with that,” she explains.

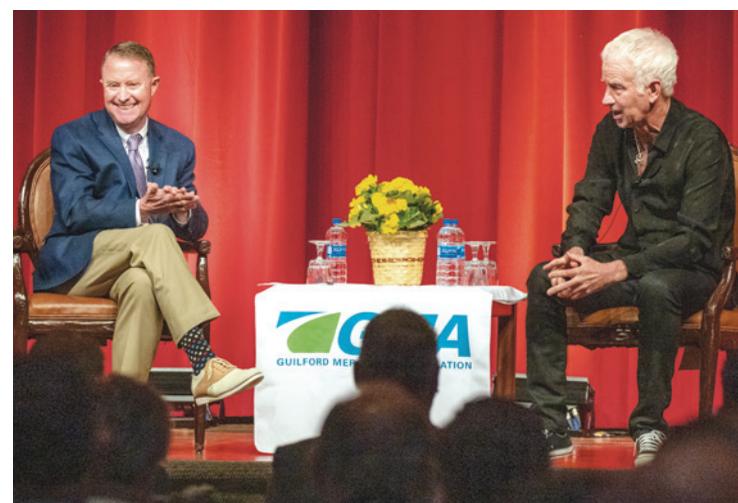
Guilford Metro 9-1-1 has other responsibilities. The Technical Services Division maintains more than 6,700 radio units for the city, county, and other agencies including universities, Cone Health, and the National Park Service. That division also keeps up microwave  
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### INSIDE TRENDS



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*Trends is a publication of the Guilford Merchants Association.*



#### 2022 Annual Dinner

Emcee/moderator Trip Durham (left) chats with John McEnroe, guest speaker at the Annual Dinner held May 4 at Koury Convention Center. McEnroe entertained the crowd of more than 600 with stories of his tennis career and life lessons. Additional photos, Page 7.

# New city manager combines transportation expertise with visionary approach

**G**reensboro City Manager Taiwo Jaiyeoba describes himself as a visionary.

“I see how cities, communities, people can evolve over time,” he says. “I always believe that as a city, we shouldn’t be playing towards the past. As a visionary, you have to anticipate. You have to understand exactly what our historical past tells us, but also where the future trends may go, and try to marry those.”

Jaiyeoba, who previously served as assistant city manager in Charlotte and director of that city’s planning, design and development department, has been on the job in Greensboro since February. A native of Nigeria, Jaiyeoba’s previous municipal posts include serving in California as director of Sacramento’s Regional Transit District and in Michigan as director of planning and development in Grand Rapids.

Transportation, not surprisingly, is one of his major interests. He notes that Greensboro’s core is not divided by a freeway, as I-77 divides Charlotte. Interstate highway construction beginning in the 1950s frequently carved up cities. This practice often created physical divisions between minority communities and other neighborhoods.

Greensboro’s core has plenty of wide boulevards, as well as rail corridors, he notes, that provide benefits as well as challenges to long-range transportation planning. But Jaiyeoba considers it a benefit that highway planners routed interstates around the city center rather than through it.

One transportation-related goal in the city’s comprehensive plan got his attention as he looked into the



Taiwo Jaiyeoba’s office in the Melvin Municipal Building, where a giant whiteboard lists his current priorities.

city manager job. The plan calls for Greensboro to be “car optional” by 2040, meaning that transportation infrastructure should accommodate cyclists and pedestrians, as well as public transit and motorists.

All modes of transport, he says, should be “connected to where housing and jobs are located,” and people should feel safe with whichever mode they choose.

“To be car-optional connects everything,” Jaiyeoba says. “Economics, housing, safety, sustainability, equity. We have to look at everything as we do that.”

Jaiyeoba has been impressed by Greensboro’s long-standing investments in the arts and cultural amenities, as well as the city’s well-developed parks and recreation infrastructure.

“I did not realize until I came here how many open spaces that we have,” he says, “and that people actually use them. And there’s intentional investment by the city to actu-

ally make them active and maintain them and really drive people there. You cannot talk about quality of life and residents’ well-being if you are not in control of open spaces, active and passive, where people can really do life.”

One thing Jaiyeoba would like to improve is how Greensboro promotes itself to the rest of the state and the world. He told his interviewers that, in addition to being city manager, he wanted to be the city’s chief marketing officer.

“I want to take every opportunity I can to promote the city,” he says. Other cities in the state “are out there telling their story. We’re very

humble. I feel we need to do that more.”

For example, Jaiyeoba recently attended a national conference where he spoke about city planning. He took the opportunity to tell his audience, “If you’re wearing denim, if you’re wearing your Wranglers, the Greensboro economy thanks you.”

Until that moment, he says, those assembled hadn’t made the connection between America’s favorite work and leisure fabric and North Carolina’s third-largest city.

Score one for the city’s chief marketing officer. And it didn’t cost a dime.

*Greensboro City Manager*

336-373-2002

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**Taiwo Jaiyeoba is a native of Nigeria. His name is pronounced TY-woh JAH-ye-aw-bah**

### Education

Jaiyeoba earned a bachelor’s degree in Geography and a Master of Science degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Ife University in Nigeria. He is a graduate of the Sloan School of Management in Leadership, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



### Arts and the economy

Ryan Deal, Greensboro’s Chief Creative Economy Officer, shared an overview of the city’s efforts to further develop the arts in the downtown area at the April 12 Center City AM Briefing. Among those present at GMA headquarters was Betty Cone, a former GMA chair and originator of Center City AM Briefings some 30 years ago.



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The Guilford Merchants Association is a nonprofit organization founded in 1906. The Association is a business membership organization focused on supporting member companies with educational programming, lead generation activities, marketing opportunities, and overall enrichment while serving as a catalyst for community growth and prosperity.



Technical Services Division staff maintain radio systems for the city, county, and other clients.

## 9-1-1

Continued from page 1  
equipment and nine towers.

The agency also facilitates communications with other county and municipal governments, fire departments, emergency management, law enforcement, and other agencies across central North Carolina.

Guilford Metro 9-1-1 has 93 employees when fully staffed, but keeping a full complement has been especially challenging in recent years. The changing nature of the workforce is partly responsible, Neal explains; fewer people expect to spend a decade or more in a particular job. Stress is

another factor. In late April, Guilford Metro 9-1-1 had 15 open positions.

Neal understands the challenges the agency's employees face. "The No. 1 reason that we see people leaving is that they can't handle the mental stress of the calls," she says.

The agency has "made great strides in the last year" to bolster employee retention with "salary increases, bonuses" and has amplified recruitment efforts. A recruitment video on the agency's Facebook page ([tinyurl.com/yckzcp3j](https://tinyurl.com/yckzcp3j)) has been viewed more than 4,000 times.

Neal, who recently was elected to the National Emergency

Number Association board of directors, has been active in GMA for years. She frequently attends Center City AM Briefings and reports on the agency's challenges and successes.

Participation in GMA, she says, is one avenue to spread the word about the agency that answers every 9-1-1 call made in Guilford County and Greensboro.

"I just wish people understood the critical nature of what we do, why we do it," she says. "I wish everybody loved it as much as I do."

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Chris Babcock and Kiara Graham, Carter Bank & Trust.



Lisa Myers, Declutterer; LaTonya Parks, Triad Adult and Pediatric Medicine; Toni Walker of Toni Walker Photography.



Above: Cheryl Bice, stitch-FX; Karen Bass, Triad Adult and Pediatric Medicine. Left: Joan Rogers, Compass Insurance Services; James Milloway, NEXA Mortgage.



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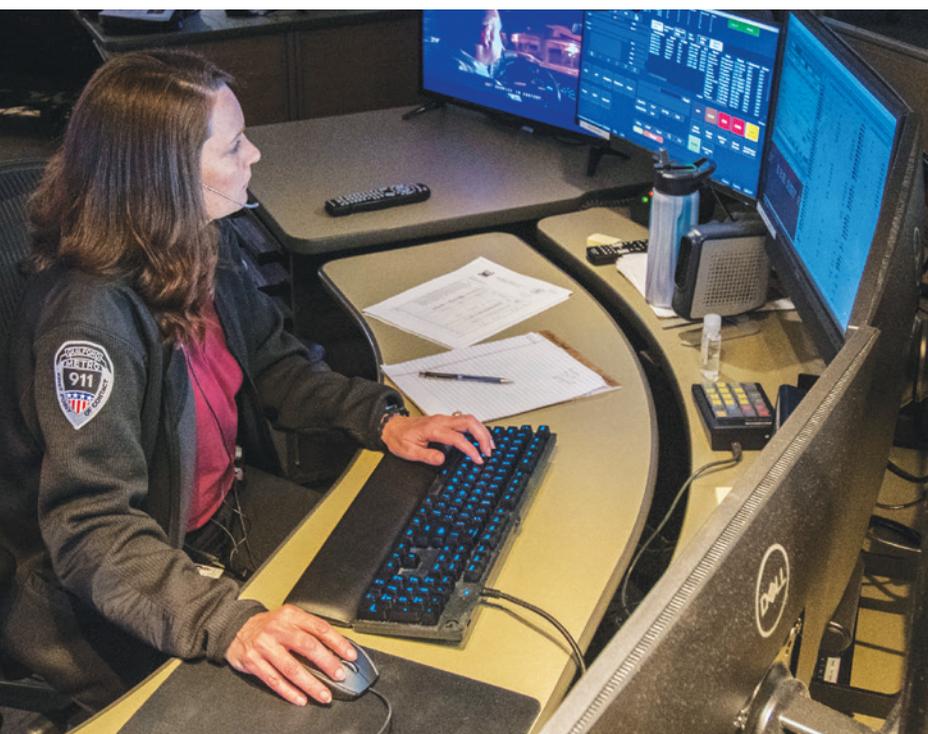
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Guilford Metro 9-1-1 Senior Supervisor Page Cummings.

# Choose a web developer whose skill set matches your needs

BY KEIR DAVIS

From the local car wash to the neighborhood dog walker, everyone has a website.

Websites are now considered standard, no matter the business size. However, websites are not “one size fits all.”



Davis

For purely marketing website needs, there are many great marketing and brand agencies around

town. They have expertise in creating websites with a cohesive look and feel.

Depending on your business type, you may need additional features such as event and reservation management, customer portal, or ecommerce functionality. If your website has more complex requirements, it's important to choose a company with expertise in website development.

Engaging a software developer is critical. A software developer will be able to create a website with a solid foundation for growth.



As a result, additional complexity, interactivity, or functionality will work seamlessly.

It is also prudent to ensure the software development isn't outsourced. Outsourced development may be problematic for a number of reasons:

Different time zones, languages, and work schedules may cause development to be protracted.

The “game of telephone” between multiple parties may cause key messages and design ideas to become muddled.

If you have more complex website needs, hiring a local software developer is the right choice.

At Xtern Software, all of our website development is done onsite, local to North Carolina. This means no communication delays, no messages lost in translation, and guaranteed functionality.

Our eight software developers are all graduates of UNCG, and many have

advanced degrees. Past hires have also come from A&T, Guilford College, and other local institutions.

When you hire a local software developer to build your website, you can be sure your website will function exactly as expected.

And you'll always have local support to troubleshoot any issues or create future website enhancements.

*Keir Davis is president of Xtern Software. sales@xternsoftware.com 336-574-3731*

## Networking group evolves into ‘business family’ during two decades as GMA member

It was nearly 20 years ago when Richard “Rich” Polson, a new employee at a wealth management firm, more or less inherited membership in one of GMA's formal networking groups.

A veteran member of the firm decided to trim some of his commitments, and his seat in the Competitive Advantage Networking (CAN) group, was offered to Polson.

He didn't realize then how he would come to value the associations made and developed at those Friday morning meetings in GMA's Community Room.



He didn't know that the members of the CAN group would become his “business family.”

It was through the CAN group, Polson explains, that he learned what true networking is all about.

“Networking,” he says, “is much deeper than just showing up at an After Work Network and shaking hands and passing out business cards.”

The relationships fostered



Richard ‘Rich’ Polson is a registered financial advisor.

in the CAN group's structured environment allow the members to become known to one another on multiple levels, he says. That, in turn, builds trust. And trust leads to becoming referable.

CAN group members, Polson says, represent a wide variety of professions but share important traits.

“CAN group members are like-minded,” he says. “We want to help people, and we're able to help people by what we do professionally, meeting either a business need or a personal need.”

Polson's career has evolved since he first joined GMA and the CAN group. He's now an independent

registered financial advisor with Kingsview Partners, assisting clients with retirement planning. Polson is a partner in Kingsview, a “boutique national firm.”

Polson has taken part in numerous GMA programs over the years, from Workplace Workshops to Center City AM Briefings. “But mainly,” he says, “my connection has been the leads group on Friday morning.”

Those associations equip him to help folks who may need something in addition to retirement planning, he says. “And because I know and trust people in my leads group, I can easily refer them with confidence.”

*Richard Polson  
Kingsview Partners  
Kingsview.com  
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## Industries of the Blind creates jobs in Greensboro, sends products nationwide

Consider the humble retractable ballpoint pen used by federal employees everywhere. Slender, black, and ornamented with four silvery bands around the middle. A sturdy pocket clip. A robust spring mechanism that operates with a crisp, satisfying click.

White lettering on the barrel reads “Skilcraft – U.S. Government.”

What’s missing is Made in Greensboro, where the ballpoint pens (black ink or blue) have been produced by Industries of the Blind (IOB) since 1968.

“We’re a preferred source” of pens for the federal

government, says Richard Oliver, who’s in charge of community relations and government outreach for IOB. “We make millions of ink pens per year.”

A series of federal laws enacted beginning in the late 1930s helped to create employment opportunities for the blind and allowed non-profits who employ them to become preferred suppliers of products and services for government contracts.

IOB, which began in 1933 as the Guilford County Association for the Blind, has evolved over the decades to employ around 240 persons, sighted as well as legally blind.

Most work at IOB’s main facility on Gate City Boulevard near UNCG, where pens and a variety of other products are manufactured. Others are employed at a warehouse and distribution center near Piedmont Triad International Airport.

“You have people who are

sighted working side by side with people who are blind,” says Oliver, a career IOB employee who is legally blind. “And you can’t really tell, because the work gets done.”

Oliver seems to be on a first-name basis with every co-worker. Plus, he can describe in detail how various equipment works, right down to custom safety features and how long a particular operation takes. He knows, he says, because he’s done most of those jobs.

IOB’s government contracts require that 75 percent of the direct labor hours be performed by blind personnel.

Staffers are cross-trained,

Oliver says, to meet the ebb and flow of federal contract work. The 2020 census brought a surge in demand for clipboards, Oliver says. “We wish the census was more often than every 10 years,” he quips.

When a soldier slips into a pair of physical fitness pants for a pre-dawn run, there’s a good chance those pants were sewn at IOB. Ditto for standard-issue, tan-colored Army T-shirts and fire-resistant trousers.

The competitive job market affects IOB just as it does any other business, Oliver says, and that includes recruitment.

“It’s as hard to find people who are blind as it is to find people who are sighted,” he says. “We use social media, and we try to recruit from across the country.”

IOB has employees who live throughout the area, from Reidsville to Lexington, and provides transportation for them.



Richard Oliver displays an Army combat jacket, one of several military products made by IOB.



Sumonia Roberson sews cotton mop heads. IOB saw demand rise with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.



Michelle Torain assembles one of several types of pens made by IOB.

“We drive and pick people up and take people home, every single day,” he says, “because people want to work.”

Oliver says IOB has been a GMA member for at least 20 years.

“We look to GMA events to get out and connect with local businesses,” he explains. “What can we do for you? What can you do for us?”

“That’s what we really like about GMA.”

*Industries of the Blind*  
920 W. Gate City Blvd.  
Greensboro  
[industriesoftheblind.com](http://industriesoftheblind.com)  
800-909-7086

## Across town or cross-country, movers serve families and business clients

There's a ripple effect from the tight housing market that you may not have considered – unless you are in the domestic moving business.

When there's not a lot of turnover in the housing market, moving companies feel the pinch immediately. And with homebuyers having to put more into a new home, those who are moving are especially cautious about the related expenses.

"People are more budget-conscious right now," says Tyler Kastl. "As a result of the housing market, we've had to pivot to some commercial business."

Kastl and business partner Randell Atkins own Marathon Moving Co. The Greensboro firm is now in its seventh year of operations. Kastl and Atkins, once employees, purchased the company about two years ago.

Marathon Moving's office and 5,000-square-foot warehouse are in an industrial area near Piedmont Triad International Airport.

Marathon Moving operates five box trucks with a staff of about 20



Randell Atkins (left) and Tyler Kastl own Marathon Moving Co.

### NEW MEMBER PROFILE

movers. The firm scales up, leasing additional trucks as needed, during peak moving season, which typically runs from May to September.

"We've got everything that the big boys have, just on a slightly smaller scale," says Kastl. "We service the

whole East Coast and get to California once or twice a year."

Local domestic moves – transferring household contents from one Triad home to another – remain the company's core business. The "sweet spot, where we get most of our business," Kastl says, is a three-bedroom home – "a little too much for a family to do with their buddies."

Marathon has served commercial

clients all along, Kastl says, but that segment has become more important "with the crazy market now."

"We're really trying to focus on relationships with commercial real estate brokers and business owners," Kastl says. "That's part of the reason we came to GMA."

Kastl credits GMA member Dede Potter, owner of the mobile storage firm MI-BOX Triad, Inc., for introducing Marathon Moving to GMA.

"She's been telling me for years that I should join," Kastl says. Marathon Moving added its name to GMA's rolls earlier this year.

Kastl and Atkins say they look forward to expanding on the networking they are already enjoying with MI-BOX and Potter.

"She's awesome," Kastl says. "We started our businesses around the same time, so we've watched each other grow. It's kind of a synergistic relationship. We help their clients and vice versa."

*Marathon Moving Co.*  
*marathonmovingcompany.com*  
*336-895-1605*

## Five strategies to turn the Great Resignation into the Great Opportunity

BY MERIDITH ELLIOTT POWELL

Some experts used to say the best strategy to improve business performance is to align your marketing and human resources teams. Get those two divisions working together and your business surely will grow.

But today's marketplace has changed. The biggest obstacle to growth for most companies is not sales but supply chain and labor shortages. Any CEO will tell you that the questions keeping her up at night are, will we have enough product to sell, and, will we have the people to sell it?

Supply chain is a tough one. There is not much anyone can do about getting ships into port, finding truckers, or dealing with all the other supply chain obstacles that surface on a regular basis.

But when it comes to labor, you do have some control and leverage.

Your best shot of turning

the great resignation into your greatest opportunity is to align your human resources and marketing teams. Start by thinking of human resources as a sales engine, working constantly to find,



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attract, retain, develop and hire the right people. Finding the right people is where marketing comes in. The best talent are just like your best prospects. They are not actively looking for a new opportunity. To get them to come and join your company is going to take market positioning, branding, the right messaging, and consistent proactive focus – everything that your marketing team knows how to do.

How do you align your human resources and marketing teams?

1. **Set the Meeting** – Get

### BUSINESS GROWTH

your human resources and marketing teams talking and lay out the objective. Help them see the "why" behind the strategy of how the marketplace has changed, and how talent acquisition needs to change with it.

Share the strengths each division brings to the table, and begin to brainstorm on how they can work together. Leave this meeting with a clear understanding of the common goal and the individual role each department will play.

2. **Clarify the Avatar** – Just like you define the perfect customer, you need to define the perfect employee. You have team members who love your company, are completely committed, and do an exceptional job. You need to clearly define who they are – their qualities, characteristics

and skills. From that description you build your avatar, which is the employee you are going to be marketing to. Just as you define the ideal customer for your sales team, do the same for your recruiting team.

3. **Define the Strategy** – With the avatar defined, you can begin to design the strategy of how you are going to find them, attract them, and continuously market to them.

Where are they? What social media platforms do they use? What networking or community groups are they a part of?

What is the right messaging? Remember, this is a long process, and should be approached with a well-defined strategy.

4. **Take Action** – Create a timeline for executing your strategy. Focus more on progress than perfection. Consistency is key. Track and measure performance to stay on schedule.

5. **Adjust and Improve** – What is working, what is not, and what do you need to adjust?

Keep your human resources and marketing teams talking, strategizing and coming up with innovative ideas to find the best and brightest for your team. Review the process every few months.

Remember: Your best opportunity for growth is to win the war for talent. The business is out there, the supply chain will improve, and you'll want to be well positioned with strong talent. Get proactive and align your marketing and human resources teams. Turn all of this uncertainty into your greatest competitive advantage.

*Meridith Elliott Powell is an author, sales strategist and leadership expert. She has been a featured speaker in GMA's Workplace Workshop series.*



**Name:** Harrison Savage  
**Hometown:** Lexington, Mass.  
**Residence:** Greensboro  
**Age:** 25  
**Education:** B.S., Sport Management  
 Elon University  
**Business:** Greensboro Swarm  
**Role:** Account Executive



**On Risers:**

GMA really hooked me, and then I started going to Risers lunches, once everything picked up. It's been really good to meet people my age and be able to network through them.

**Personal:**

I'm a huge Red Sox fan. I like gaming, which helped me and my friends stay connected during Covid. I've picked up golf; I play two or three times a week.

Harrison Savage  
 Greensboro Swarm  
 336-907-3605

**Responsibilities:**

Getting the word out about the Greensboro Swarm and basketball in the Triad.

**On GMA:**

I started with the Swarm on March 9, 2020 (just in time for Covid). GMA was one of the organizations I was told to network through and create connections. They did a really good job of hosting online events and Zooms.



**Learning at lunchtime**

RISERS Erica Aronson of Tim Westfall State Farm (left) and Ashley Mitchell of Staff South were among those attending a recent Lunch & Learn event at GMA headquarters. RISERS members are treated to a free box lunch and experts who share insights and tips that can help them excel in their careers. RISERS is a GMA program for younger adults. For more information, contact Vice President Michelle Bolick at 336-378-6350.



Speaker John McEnroe (center) poses with GMA Board Member Tara Burgio-Wheelihan and her husband, Mark Wheelihan.

**2022 Annual Dinner Snapshots**



Mary McElroy of the Atlantic Coast Conference and McEnroe.



GMA/FirstPoint Chairman Clarence McDonald of Wells Fargo.



Kathy Haines of Kathy Haines Homes by eXp Realty; Greensboro Council Member Tammi Thurm.



Peggy Barron-Antolin, Larissa Collins, and Jessica Thompson, all of Office Evolution of the Triad.



Carmen and Sue Falcone of Remarkable! A Speakers Bureau; Greg Cox of Bank of America.



Lindy Fuller and Michelle Shanks of Summit Credit Union.



Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro President Walker Sanders and Anthony Robertson of FirstPoint.

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