

Rhonda Bellamy

Rhonda Bellamy's name is synonymous with the arts in New Hanover County. She was the Executive Director of The Arts Council of Wilmington and New Hanover County for 10 years and as of this spring is its President and CEO. "There are about 75 NC counties with arts councils. Wilmington is number eight in terms of size and economic impact, and we keep on growing and leading," she explained. "The arts are a driver and leading indicator of economic prosperity. Our job at the Council is to facilitate their growth and promote their presence."

Among other achievements, Rhonda is the founder of the NC Black Film Festival, is the newly-appointed chair of the Council of the Arts for NC, has served on numerous cultural and civic boards, hosts "Around Town with Rhonda Bellamy" on WHQR, and is a Wilmington "Living Legend," an award she won in 2016. "I didn't know I was old enough!" she quipped. She has the energy and the drive of a person who loves to achieve results, but first and foremost she loves the arts.

Wilmington is her home, though she was born in New York City. Her parents were Wilmington natives and moved back here when she was a teenager. "I was traumatized," she said. "I missed the city's bustle and culture. My mother bought tickets to every arts event nearby so that I could be sustained by art — and reminded of New York. It was a generous sacrifice she made for me, and I treasure it." She attended NC Central University and graduated with a

degree in English and a minor in journalism, and went on to a 20-year career as a news director and radio host. “I love words,” she says. Despite outward appearances, Rhonda is an introvert. “I get my energy recharge from being alone, believe it or not.”

She is not only a WIN member but a WIN grantee. The Arts Council of Wilmington and NHC won a grant in 2021 for the Rail Trail. The grant supported the initial assessment and development of Wilmington’s proposed public recreation space and community connector along the former rail lines downtown. “Working with planners, designers, and consultants on this project is a logistical ‘symphony,’ and we have a clear vision of where we want to be. WIN’s grant helped us to convince the city that we deserved their support. And we are moving forward to realize that vision.”

Rhonda is a proud parent of two, has four grandchildren, and a large family near and far. Her passions are reading, writing, acting, interior design, and vintage thrifting. About WIN she says, “I love what WIN accomplishes by making a difference in peoples’ lives in the community. I’m proud to be a member.” And we are proud that she is.