Gina Loften is the Chief Technology Officer for Microsoft US. She currently leads a team that helps customers reimagine their business, achieve successful outcomes, and delivers on the promise of digital transformation across their enterprise. Throughout her career, Gina has been recognized for accelerating profitable business results and building diverse high-performance teams. She has also demonstrated her expertise in mergers & acquisitions by identifying and integrating software and consulting companies, creating portfolios of new products and services, and driving increased market share. Gina has held executive positions in Research, Development, Sales, and Consulting Services at IBM and Microsoft. Her roles have been characterized by increasing responsibility, scope, and range from emerging businesses to multiple billion-dollar impacts to the organization. Gina is a published thought leader and sought-after speaker, is active in her community, and advocates for young women and BIPOC pursuing careers in STEM.
BT Babatunde (NCSSM ‘17)

BT Babatunde (NCSSM ‘17) is a biochemist pursuing a B.S. in Biochemistry and a B.A. in Public Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ms. Babatunde is a Chancellor’s Science Scholar, a scholarship program focused on increasing diversity in STEM research and preparing students for PhD and MD/PhD programs, and works in recruitment for the program. She works in the Waters Lab in the Chemistry department of UNC, where she researches protein characterization of mutant and wild type proteins.

She has participated in summer REUs (Research Experiences for Undergraduates) at the UNC School of Pharmacy, where she researched chromatin extraction from tissue, and at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville’s Chemistry Department, where she researched organic synthesis of liposomes for triggered drug release. She has also presented her research at several symposiums and research conferences and won a presentation award at the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students.

Outside of her research, Ms. Babatunde spends her time working in UNC’s Executive Branch of Student Government, as a Resident Advisor to first-year students and in her campus ministry, Summit College.

Rachel Burton

Rachel Burton is a striking example of a strong, multi-faceted business leader with a unique path to success. She initiated the creation of a biofuel curriculum at Central Carolina Community College, where she was an automotive instructor through 2005. She then transitioned into a start-up, Piedmont Biofuels, where she helped design, build, and operate the 4 million gallon biodiesel production facility in Pittsboro, NC.

Ms. Burton serves as strong role model for small business owners in North Carolina but also for women who want to pursue non-traditional careers. Ms. Burton began her career path in biofuels through a two-year degree in automotive technology degree. She participated in the Perkins program for women in non-traditional careers and received the Dennis Wicker vocational scholarship to attend Central Carolina Community College.

In 2012, Ms. Burton completed a two- and half-year United States Department of Energy Small Business Innovation grant for $1.2 million investigating the use of enzymes for biodiesel production. Her ground-breaking research and commercial development work on enzymatic biodiesel was recognized by the National Biodiesel Board with the National Biodiesel Researcher of the Year.

Dr. Adrienne D. Cox

Dr. Adrienne D. Cox is Professor and Chief of the Division of Cancer Research in the Department of Radiation Oncology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). She is also Professor in the Department of Pharmacology and a member of the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, where she directs the Cancer Cell Biology T32 Training Program. She has studied cancer-driving RAS proteins for many years, covering everything from science-nerdy questions about the role of RAS in basic mechanisms of cancer biology to efforts to improve treatment of RAS-driven cancers such as those of the pancreas, lung and colon, and melanoma.

Dr. Cox publishes her research in respected scientific journals, teaches graduate courses, consults for pharmaceutical and biotech companies, serves on mentoring committees, grant review panels and external advisory boards, and enjoys speaking with the public about biomedical research. She is also the faculty advisor for the student Science Writing and Communication Club and has guided her own trainees towards successful careers in academia and industry. In addition to her teaching awards, most recently Dr. Cox has been honored as the recipient of UNC-CH’s 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award in Mentoring.
Ashlyn Sparrow

Ashlyn Sparrow is an independent game designer. Her work focuses on creating socially impactful games and health focused app interventions. In 2013, Ashlyn was the Learning Technology Director of the Game Changer Chicago Design Lab at the University of Chicago, devoted to creating game-based health interventions supported by funding from the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. During her tenure she designed and led the production of The Source, S.E.E.D, Hexacago Health Academy, Bystander, and Prognosis.

In 2018, She became the Assistant Director of the Weston Game Lab (WGL) at the Media Arts, Data, and Design (MADD) Center at the University of Chicago where she teaches undergraduate, graduate and K-12 students how to design their own games while uncovering the sociopolitical implications of their designs. Through WGL, she has developed a series of alternate reality games including Indiedeck award-winning game Terrarium, A Labyrinth, and Echo. In addition to her work at WGL, she works as a game designer and programmer in Chicago, having worked on Oni Fighter Yasuke for Waking Oni Games.
Website: ashlynsparrow.com

Dr. Heike Sederoff

Dr. Heike Sederoff is a Professor of Plant Biology in the Department of Plant and Microbial Biology and Chair of the Systems and Synthetic Biology Cluster at North Carolina State University. Her broad research interests have a core focus on the development of more sustainable food production and energy conservation through crop improvement.

Dr. Sederoff started her scientific career after completing an apprenticeship in a publishing company. She studied Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of Göttingen in Germany and received her PhD in Plant Biochemistry. She was awarded a Feodor-Lynen Fellowship from the Humboldt Foundation for her research. She then joined NCSU where she researched how plants sense and respond to gravity at the NASA Specialized Center for Research and Training and in the microgravity environment on the International Space Station.

In her Earth-bound lab, Dr. Sederoff works with her students to understand the molecular basis of stress responses in plants and to engineer new molecular pathways into plants to increase their productivity and sustainability for the use in jet fuel production as well as for food and feed with funding from the Department of Energy, NASA, and the National Science Foundation. Her discoveries are licensed for commercialization and used in collaborations with other labs and organizations, nationally and internationally.