



### Resolutioning with Down-Payment

Ah, the New Year! This is a time for new beginnings and new perspectives—and, the old tradition of new resolutions! While some things in life may be spoken-into-existence, instituting positive behaviors and healthy habits usually involve significant effort on our part. If you're like most, your new year's resolution focuses on outcome: the mental picture you have of yourself after the change has been done. That part is important! And, in the spirit of personal growth, we might also reflect on our resolutions more deeply:

**Value.** How does this change function and what makes it worthwhile? To what extent might it make me a better or happier person? How does it connect to my future? Is there impact outside of myself, such as people in my life or the world in which I live?

**Motivation.** Why do I want this? Look inside—what are the qualities you identify? Are your feelings very internal? What external pressures might be at play? Do your motivations take on any positive or negative vibes? How does the experience of trying figure in? What do these layers signify, and how might your motivations shift in the process?

**Requirements.** What will it require of me? Consider any time or money or logistic commitments needed, but also be especially aware of internal requirements. Will it involve patience, sacrifice, consistence, or is it likely to rouse negative emotions? Consider your internal strengths and 'blind spots.' What are the likely challenges and what measures of support would be helpful to your journey?

An arduous aspect of change often comes "up-front": the consideration, deliberation, planning, and preparing done before anything substantive actually happens. This important internal work is like a down payment—and the more you put down up front, the easier the payments after! Also, think of internal work as a continual process. At any time in your change journey, you may find it helpful to revisit the areas above as a way to inform your next steps. GOOD LUCK in your personal aspirations this year!

*Written by Brett Bowers, LCMHCS, LCAS, NCC, MAC in the Office of Wellness at NCCU School of Law*



### ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

#### NCCU School of Law Former Interim Dean Elaine O' Neal is Durham's First Black Female Mayor

On December 6, 2021, Elaine 'O Neal '91 was sworn in as Durham's first black female Mayor. A Durham native, O'Neal was educated at Lyon Park, Morehead Elementary, Rogers-Herr Jr. High, and Hillside High School where she graduated with honors. O'Neal served as District Court Judge for 17 years and was the first woman in Durham County to be named Chief District Court Judge.



In the 1990s, she was a pioneer and advocate as a judge around same-sex adoption, supporting LGBTQ families in North Carolina. In 2011, she was elected the first woman Superior Court Judge in Durham County. In 2015, she was appointed Chair of the Superintendent's Code of Student Conduct Task Force for Durham Public Schools where she worked to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline.

She retired from the bench in 2018 to lead the NCCU School of Law as Interim Dean. She formerly served as a member of the NCCU School of Law Board of Visitors. She has also served as a board member and a co-founder to a number of other organizations and institutions, including Women's Recovery House, Families First, and Restoration Institute for Leaders. O'Neal is a former commissioner for the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies.

In 2018, Mayor Steve Schewel appointed her as Chair of the Racial Equity Task Force for the City of Durham, where she led a diverse cross-section of Durhamites to create policy and budget recommendations on complex issues.

O'Neal is a double eagle and earned her undergraduate and law degrees from NCCU.

#### Announcements

- **Faculty Promotion Nakia Davis '01** - Congratulations to Professor Nakia Davis on her promotion as Associate Dean of Clinical Education and Experiential Learning.
- **NCCU Re-entry Testing** - COVID testing for faculty and staff continues this week at the A.E. Student Union Room 144.
- **Final Call for Article Submissions Of Counsel Magazine** - Please submit all articles by January 28<sup>th</sup>
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday** - January 17<sup>th</sup>
- **Greeks** - If you are a member of a greek letter fraternity or sorority celebrating Founders Day in January, send us a photo.



### Q&A with Student Bar Association President Chazle'



**Name:** Chazle' Woodley | **Year:** 3L  
**Hometown:** Durham, NC  
**Undergraduate Institution:** UNC-Chapel Hill

#### What are your goals as SBA President for 2022?

My goals are to provide students with more resources surrounding mental health because we are still attending law school in the midst of a pandemic. Also providing opportunities for students to safely socialize and enjoy time with their classmates and colleagues. I also plan on supporting as many student organizations as possible with their events, goals, and etc.

**What are you looking forward to this year?** Although I will miss my law school dearly, I'm looking forward to graduating this year, passing the Bar, and being sworn in as an attorney. I'm also looking forward to seeing my son go to kindergarten. He started this law school journey with me, and now we're both about to embark on a season of transition.

**What are your New Year's Resolutions for 2022?** My New Year's Resolutions are to spend more time outside enjoying fresh air, exercise more, be more mindful of my eating habits, keep a consistent schedule for therapy, continue to plan out my weeks with flexibility, and continue to cherish moments with my family.

**What three words come to mind when you think of NCCU School of Law?** Truth, Service, and Family are the three words that come to mind when I think of NCCU School of Law.

**Why should students get involved with SBA?** I encourage students to get involved with SBA or any other student organizations because it truly allows you to experience another aspect of law school outside of studying and reading for class. Serving in student organizations allows you to see the heart of the school which is truth and service, and it's a great way to meet classmates and colleagues and participate in creative events and service projects.

#### Top three tips for law students

My top three tips for law students are: 1) Embrace every moment of learning because each moment is grooming you to be a better attorney when you leave the nest. Three years will fly by! 2) Take advantage of every resource available to you. You pay for the resources so utilize them to your advantage. 3) Never ever ever give up and persevere. You don't have to conquer anything in a day - just take it chunk by chunk and bit by bit. Hard work pays off!

#### -What are your future career plans?

My future career plans are vast, but initially I plan to serve as a litigation associate practicing civil litigation such as business litigation, mass torts, class action, higher education, products liability, and tort trial practice. I also plan to do juvenile justice work pro bono. One day, I would love to serve in a public service role such as a judge or senator.

### ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

#### Former Law Professor Dorothy Hairston Mitchell Sworn in as District Court Judge for Durham County

On January 3, 2022, Dorothy Hairston Mitchell '02 took the oath as District Court Judge for District 14 in Durham County. A former Clinical Associate Professor at NCCU School of Law, Mitchell fills the vacant seat formerly held by Judge Brian Wilks. Previously, she was an Assistant Public Defender at the Durham County Public Defender's Office and practiced law at the Law Office of Dorothy Hairston and at Tracy Hicks Barley & Associates.



Mitchell is a double eagle and earned her undergraduate and law degrees from NCCU.

### Life Coaching for Law Students



#### Did you know?

Did you know that the Law School provides free one-on-one life coaching? And, did you know that professional coaching can help with a variety of motivational factors?

To schedule an appointment, contact Stephanie Butler-Fallahi at (919) 530.6618, at sbutlerf@nccu.edu, or drop by The Coaching Lab space any Wednesday at noon!

#### Quote

"You don't have to be great to get started but you have to get started to be great." -Les Brown

If you would like to share your good news, career promotions, recognitions, or other points of pride, please email us at:  
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