



Cathy Bessant
Chief Executive Officer



Cathy Bessant is CEO of Foundation For The Carolinas, the community foundation serving Charlotte and a 13-county region. The fifth-largest community foundation in the U.S. with more than \$5 billion in assets and nearly 3,000 charitable funds, FFTC leads a variety of civic leadership initiatives in areas such as affordable housing and housing insecurity, economic opportunity, public school reform, arts funding, childhood literacy, the environment and more.

Active in the region, Bessant received the Distinguished Service Award from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. In addition, she was awarded the North Carolina Order of the Long Leaf Pine; was recognized by the Charlotte Business Journal with the Women in Business Lifetime Achievement Award; named Charlotte BusinessWoman of the Year by Queens University; and is a previous winner of the Charlotte Woman of the Year award.

For four decades, Bessant worked at Bank of America, joining in 1982 as a corporate banker. She held numerous senior leadership positions within the company: president of Global Product Solutions and Global Treasury Services; chief marketing officer; president of Consumer Real Estate and Community Development Banking; national Small Business Segment executive; market president of Bank of America, Florida; president of Global Corporate Banking; and chief operations and technology officer.

From October 2021 until December 2023, Bessant was stationed in Paris as vice chair, Global Strategy, where she focused on the bank's global integrated strategy, governance, and client and regulator engagement. She was also a member of Bank of America's executive management team.

After ranking No. 1 for three consecutive years, Bessant was inducted into the "25 Most Powerful Women in Banking" Hall of Fame by American Banker in 2020. Bessant was named to Barron's "100 Most Influential Women in U.S. Finance" and she received WatersTechnology's 2019 Women in Technology and Data Trailblazer Award. She has also appeared on Working Mother magazine's "50 Most Powerful Working Moms" list.

Bessant serves on the board of directors of Zurich Insurance Group and USA Field Hockey and is on the advisory board for (and a graduate of) the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. Locally, she is on the board of directors for Charlotte Center City Partners and the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance and is a strategic advisor to the Charlotte Executive Leadership Council.

Before assuming the CEO role, Bessant previously chaired Foundation For The Carolinas' Governing Board of Directors. She also formerly co-chaired the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing & Homelessness Strategy and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Citizen Task Force; chaired the North Tryon Vision Plan Advisory Committee and the Charlotte Chamber

of Commerce; and served on the board of trustees for the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

As part of a leadership course at Ross, she summited Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro, the world's tallest freestanding mountain, in 2018. Along with her husband, John Clay, Bessant is a proud parent of two.

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