

Bio

Dr. Antonia Arnold-McFarland

Advocate for Hope, STEM and the Arts

Community Servant and Technical Professional

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Summary: Dr. Antonia Arnold-McFarland is a multi-faceted community advocate who enjoys inspiring hope and positive change in others via her involvement in the community. She works



full-time as a technical professional who manages and leads quality engineering projects, programs and process improvements. She also enjoys coaching others on career development, project management and problem-solving methods. In her spare time “Toni” or “Dr. Toni” as she is known, applies these same skills as she serves the community in various capacities. Her Christian faith is the foundation that enables her to have hope and vision to help and lead others.

Toni is a recent author, lecturer and scholar in music and arts of the African American Worship Experience. She leverages this research along with her academic studies, cultural undergirding in African American History and lived experiences to bring diverse and inclusive perspectives to her corporate and community involvement. Her belief is that diversity should matter to everyone. Society cannot afford to exclude any human potential that might bring life-changing solutions to the complex problems of today’s world.

Background: Toni is originally from Spartanburg, SC where she was raised by educators, along with her two siblings. Today they all work in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), all have graduate degrees and are all accomplished musicians. Her mother’s untimely death when they were young taught them the value of faith, resilience, practicality, family and community. Her father raised them as a single parent and continued to instill strong values in them. She is married to Tony D. McFarland, Sr who also shares her passion for music. In their spare time, they enjoy vacationing, family time, performing live music and attending music concerts.

Education and Training: Toni received a B.S in Mechanical Engineering and a minor in African American Studies (1996) from N. C. State University, Raleigh, NC while already working full time as a manufacturing engineer. As a mid-career professional, she earned an MBA in Global Management from the University of Phoenix Raleigh Campus (2007). Her engineering experience, project work and successful exam performance earned her the Six Sigma Black Belt Certification (American Society for Quality, 2008). This is a certification in quality that applies statistical problem-solving methods to minimize defects and achieve process control.

She combined her passion and profession together when she received her Doctor of Ministry in Creative Arts from the Graduate Theological Foundation of Mishawaka, IN (2016). Her doctoral research concentrated on the African American Worship Experience. It leveraged quantitative

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and qualitative research methods for problem-solving and improvement in music and arts ministry in the Black Church.

Employment: Toni has worked full time for Deere and Company since 1998. She recently took on an exciting new assignment as an Analytics Lead in Quality Engineering. This team is a part of Factory Engineering at John Deere Turf Care located in Fuquay-Varina, NC. Prior to this role, she worked eight years at the Corporate Office (Moline, IL) for Enterprise Quality as a project coach, project leader and instructor on Six Sigma Methodology to improve product and process quality. This requires her to travel to US factories and internationally, while working across diverse groups and cultures. She has over 20 years of experience at Deere in various technical roles of increasing responsibility, including technical troubleshooting for dealer technicians, manufacturing engineering, supply management, quality and now enhancing this with data analytics.

Prior to working at Deere, Toni gained work experience with other companies. While in college, she gained her early engineering experience as an intern with United Technologies, Pratt and Whitney. She worked on the problem history file and in the Controls Group for military fighter jet engines. She worked for Nucor Steel from 1996 – 1998 in facility maintenance and manufacturing prior to and after college graduation.

Music emphasis: Toni completed 15 years of private piano lessons during her formative years at Converse College Pre-College music school (Spartanburg, SC) and studied violin for 8 years. While in college she studied 5 years of Black Sacred Music while singing in New Horizons Choir at NC State University and completed classes in music theory and music literature as continued education. She continued her music education with music classes in jazz improvisation and Sacred Music at North Carolina Central University. She completed several 6-8-week sessions of vocal training via Vocal Precision Studio (Raleigh, NC) while pursuing her Doctor of Ministry Degree.

Dr. Antonia Arnold-McFarland is a rising music ministry consultant/strategist, adjunct professor and author in the African American Worship Experience. Toni has over 20 years of music ministry experience in utilizing her vocal, piano, and directing skills in churches in the Raleigh-Durham area. She often is asked to expand her abilities beyond music to teach, speak and consult in ministry organization, planning, operations and leadership training. She has participated in several community groups. She was most known vocally for serving and rendering live performances with Blessed Union, The Group which she co-founded with her husband Tony.

During her doctoral research, Toni founded and launched an ongoing music ministry renewal initiative called Gospel Music One Sound Project. The aim of this effort is to provide services and activities which unify and renew the purpose of gospel music practitioners to “one sound”, as demonstrated in 2 Chronicles 5:13. She authored *Moving Forward and Facing the Future* released in spring 2018 as a practical guide, based on the research. This effort on improvement in the Arts can be accessed at GospelMusicOneSound.com for a review of the full details.

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Publications: Books - *The Evolution of African-American Worship (2019)*, *Moving Forward and Facing the Future in the Black Church Worship Experience (2018)*, both books are hard/e-copy on Amazon, Barnes and Noble and other online marketplaces), Music- *Your Love is All I Need (2015 music single 2015 Amazon and I-tunes)*, *I'm Covered (2015 music single Amazon and I-tunes)*. Access amazon.com/author/drtoni to learn more on these books.

Recognition:

2006- Musician of the Year (NC Gospel Choirs and Choruses, Raleigh-Durham Chapter)
2014- "I Am Radio" New Artist Showcase - Stellar Awards
2016- Charles Wesley Prize- Sacred Music and Liturgy
2019- National PanHellenic Council Greater Raleigh Area Gus Witherspoon Award, Cultural Arts
2020 - John Deere Collaboration Award
2020 – RTP NSBE Professional Chapter of the Year (*top ranked out of 85*)

Community Service:

Cortechs Robotics/FIRST North Carolina- Toni's service in this charity is one way she enjoys giving back in STEM. She has volunteered since Jan 2017 with Cortechs Robotics in Cary, NC. This is a community team of high school-aged students sponsored by John Deere and other local companies. The team is a part of [FIRST](#), a global non-profit that inspires STEM in youth. Her role is to mentor and advise youth, provide team development, complete assigned business duties by the executive director and to assist with fundraising. She has connected the team with opportunities to serve underrepresented youth in STEM. They have obtained two grants that have benefited and launched camps at Garner Rd Community Center. In Summer 2018, she was invited to join the Board of Directors. In 2020, she was asked to also join [FIRST North Carolina](#), as a Board Member, with emphasis and focus on the school-to-STEM career connection.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated – In June 2017, Toni was initiated as a legacy member of the Alpha Theta Omega Chapter of this illustrious sorority. She co-chairs the Technology Committee and the newly launched target focusing on the Arts of the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement. Her participation includes serving at senior living facilities, donation to 1 Million Back Packs drive, Garner Rd Community Center clean up, the Debutante career and college workshop, Education Advancement Fund donations, and the Salvation Army Women's Shelter financial workshop. Some of these activities are programs of ATO, Inc., the non-profit foundation of this chapter which for which she serves as a general board member.

Mary Ferguson Arnold Scholarship Endowment Fund – In 2017, in honor of her mother's passion for education, Toni launched this endowment fund at Benedict College in Columbia, SC. It will provide scholarships to students pursuing careers in education. The scholarship fund reached endowment level of \$10,000 by December 31, 2019. It is now available for distribution in 2020.

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The Arnold Legacy Center– In July 2020, Toni and her siblings experience the loss of her father, after he battled several months of medical issues, complicated indirectly by the pandemic. The late Raymond Arnold, Jr. was a well-loved and respected educator in automotive technology and industrial arts. At this time, they decided to launch The Arnold Legacy Center as a place to house scholarships honoring both parents and their own accomplishments in education and STEM. The website ArnoldLegacyCenter.com also houses tributes to her father, his career in teaching and historical participation in the Wendell Scott Racing Team #34 in NASCAR. The scholarship fund is managed by the Spartanburg County Foundation.

Garner Rd. Community Center - Toni has participated for the past 5 years in the annual youth college, career and health fair. She has encouraged and supported some youth in their college journey. She most recently has been serving as an interim Board Member advising on corporate giving and assisting with event planning. She has leveraged her community connections and civic relationships with other organizations to enable advancement of the center.

Hymns for Him, Inc.- This organization is dedicated to preserving and celebrating hymns through seminars, workshops, lectures and performance. Toni is the vice president of the board and contributes her knowledge in music ministry and process improvement.

NC State University MAE Department - Toni is a graduate of the mechanical and aerospace department at NC State University. She is honored to serve on the Undergraduate Advisory Board to share her experience in corporate America and to ensure diversity in the student recruitment and retention efforts for the department.

Wake Technical College Connecting Industry to Math (CIMI) Project – In summer 2020, Toni and other area professionals participated in math instruction content development as a part of the [Connecting Industry to Math Instruction Project](#) . It is funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). STEM professionals from various companies/professional organizations were invited to participate. They met virtually with local high school and community college instructors to share math concepts used in their industries. The intent is to help teachers develop curriculums that better prepare students for real world math applications. The videos are to encourage interest in STEM by hearing industry professionals share their own personal stories. This effort started in Sept 2019 when the National Society of Black Engineers in the Raleigh area was invited to participate in the Wake Tech NSF grant proposal for this project. The content developed and video will be shared nationally. Toni's video informs students of her STEM journey and teaches on the use of the Pareto Principle. [Click here to view the CIMI Project Video.](#)

National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) – Toni has participated in the RTP NSBE chapter non-consecutively since 1999, when she was a part of the re-chartering. She currently serves on the Chapter President of the Executive Board and engages Deere with the local NSBE chapter. They provide pre-collegiate, collegiate and professional development in the community.

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Toni and two other engineers played a pioneering role in connecting John Deere with NSBE around 2000. They advocated participation from John Deere in the annual conference career fair in 2001 in Indianapolis. In Sept 2018, the NSBE RTP Chapter nominated John Deere for Exceptional Corporate Award, which they received, based on their history of commitment with NSBE at the national level.

Under her leadership of the 2019-2020 term, the chapter membership has doubled from 30 to 60, she led the re-chartering of the RTP NSBE JR chapter, a scholarship fund has been a launched, and they hosted their inaugural Living Legends Banquet as a part of the Feb 2020 Engineers Week and Black History Month Celebration. Chapter engagement and community involvement with STEM education in the community has made RTP NSBE an impactful contributor to the Triangle area.

She was been selected to be a conference presenter on “Intro to Six Sigma, A Career Enhancing Skill set” at #46 NSBE National Conference in San Antonio, Texas in August 2020. Under her leadership, the RTP Chapter was recognized nationally as the Professional Chapter of the Year and for the Professional Development Program of the Year. They also received several regional awards for chapter programs in pre-college and collegiate initiatives.

Her involvement with NSBE at John Deere has been recognized by the Collaboration Award. She coordinated the John Deere NSBE Experience planning in Summer 2020 for the Raleigh area, as a part of a larger team. This was a ½ day STEM camp focused on encouraging STEM in underserved and under-represented youth. This same event took place in three other John Deere communities that have a local NSBE Chapter. All lead coordinators will be recognized by John May, CEO of Deere & Company, as fellow recipients of the Collaboration Award.

John Deere - Cary Turf Care Black Employees Resource Group (BERG) – Toni volunteered at work to serve as the “start up” chair from April 2018 to April 2019 for this employee resource group. It consists of 80 members on its distribution list and approximately 25 active members on subcommittees consisting of employee engagement and development, partnerships and community service.

Under her leadership the group contributed to employee involvement and engagement in the local NSBE Chapter, helped launch the “People Like Us” Diversity and Inclusion Campaign at Raleigh area facilities, sponsored Six Sigma professional development training, provided an Intern Mixer, helped coordinate, research and present Black History Month Speaker Mel Pettis (Deere Retiree and Community Organizer), launched the organizations website and inaugural newsletter. They continue to serve the community with volunteerism with the Boys and Girls Club, NSBE Youth STEM activities, Daniel Center for Math and Science and the Garner Road Community Center.

With the support of management, her leadership and vision led the evolving of the group from a concept to a thriving organization. She laid a foundation for a promising future that will enable diversity and inclusion for all employees interested in supporting the organization’s mission. She will continue to participate in a new leadership role as a Liaison for the local chapter to the Enterprise Level BERG.

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Additional Organizations, Memberships and Involvement:

- World Overcomers Church – member, provide ongoing support for church initiatives
- Oak City Baptist Church – former music director (10 years combined service)
- Eastern Carolina Christian College and Seminary (Roanoke Rapids, NC) - part-time adjunct professor on the doctoral defense committee
- Society of Women Engineers – Deere corporate membership
- American Society for Quality – Raleigh Chapter
- Women Unlimited – TEAM Alumni
- NC State University Black Alumni Society – donate to endowments, 2019 Homecoming planning
- Ferguson Family Interstate Reunion – founding member and Chair since 1999
- Ferguson Family Foundation - member, charitable organization that provides scholarships
- Rookard Interstate Reunion – founding member and Chair since 2011
- Blessed Union, The Group – co-founder and visionary, gospel music ensemble
- E Flat Major Productions, LLC – founder, creative arts and cultural expressions company
- Wake County Democratic Party – Vice Chair, precinct 01-49
- City Club Raleigh – formerly the Cardinal Club. Member since 2004

References

Corporate, Technical Professional and Community Involvement

David Knight, Global Director, Turf & Utility Platform Engineering

John Deere Cary

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Dr. Alton L. Kornegay (retired professor/John Deere retiree)

NC A&T State University, Applied Engineering Technology Department

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Non-Profit and Academia Involvement

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