



## SOCIAL SERVICES NEWS

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD ELECTS FIRST FEMALE AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHAIR, WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER**

**HICKORY** -- The Catawba County Social Services Board recently elected its first female African-American as chair. She is Arnita Dula, deputy attorney for the city of Hickory. The first African-American board chair was George Mitchell, who held that position in 1973-1974.

The board also elected Chanell Morello as its newest member. She is executive director of the Learning and Personal Enrichment Innovation Center at Catawba Valley Community College in Hickory. She replaces Dr. Linda Lutz, who recently completed two terms (six years) as a member of the Social Services Board. Lutz was the previous board chair.

Dula was appointed to the board in 2013 by the North Carolina Social Services Commission. She received her law degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Law and was admitted to the N.C. State Bar in 2001. She also holds a bachelor's degree in English, graduating summa cum laude from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. She earned a master's degree in public school administration from Appalachian State University, graduating magna cum laude in 1992. She was a teacher and principal in the Caldwell County and City of Hickory public school systems before returning to college to study law.



Chanell Morello (left), new Social Services Board Member, and Arnita Dula, new Social Services Board Chair.

She is a board member of the N.C. Municipal Attorneys Association and is past president of the Catawba County Bar Association. She is a member of the Continuing Legal Education Committee of the

N.C. Bar Association. Dula is a member of the board of Frye Regional Medical Center. She is a former board member of the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce, the Rape Crisis Center of Hickory, ALFA, and the Women's Resource Center of Hickory. She has served as a mentor with Project Potential and volunteered as a Lunch Buddy in the Hickory City Schools. Dula attends Greater Faith Missionary Baptist Church and does public speaking at local churches and other organizations.

Morello was born in Miami, Fla., and has lived in Long Island, N.Y.; Pembroke Pines, Fla.; Virginia Beach, Va.; and Florence, Italy. She currently lives in Newton with her husband, Tony, and daughter. The couple is expecting a baby boy in September.

Morello has a bachelor of arts in comparative literature, graduating cum laude from New York University in 2005. Upon graduating from college, she began teaching full-time and quickly entered the field of higher education leadership. She earned a master of science degree from Barry University in exceptional student education in 2009, graduating summa cum laude, with memberships in Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) International Honor Society and Kappa Delta Pi (KDP) International Honor Society.

In 2013 Morello became a board member of the Alexander International Center. Later that year, Morello was the recipient of a \$5,000 Higher Education Professional Engagement Grant (HEPEG), awarded for her to attend a Harvard University Leadership program, which she completed in December 2013. In 2014 Morello was nominated for the Top 10 Professionals Under 40 through the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce.

Also in 2014, the North Carolina Community Colleges Adult Educator Association (NCCCAEA) presented its annual Innovation Award to the Learning & Personal Enrichment Center at CVCC. She is finishing her doctoral degree with a dual concentration in higher education leadership and organizational leadership through Nova Southeastern University. She is currently a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society and Delta Epsilon Iota Academic Honor Society. Her favorite activities include reading, writing, yoga, dancing, kayaking and spending time with family and friends. She is fluent in Spanish and Italian.

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