

## **Natalie Murdock**

### **Candidate for Durham County Soil and Water District Supervisor**

#### **Family Background**

To whom much is given, much is required. My desire to serve others and work hard is driven by a duty and obligation to make my ancestors proud. I stand on their shoulders while paving my own path.

My mother is a nurse, my father is a veteran and social worker, he was awarded with the NAACP Man of the Year Award.

My grandparents worked hard each day to make the lives of their descendants brighter. My father's father left South Carolina, at the age of 12 and learned to be a brick mason establishing Murdock Concrete Company in Guilford County, the first black-owned company in the area to make its own concrete. His wife Dorthey Lee Jackson Murdock was a cafeteria worker. She organized a strike at Bluford Elementary School in Greensboro in the 1960s, to fight for higher wages so that she could help support her family. At the time she made only 90 cents an hour! A few years before that, she joined her two daughters Charlotte and Martha Ann to march with the Woolworth Four. Some of their names are etched on a wall in the Greensboro Civil Rights Museum. I have activist roots and activist blood and have a duty and responsibility to carry that torch forward.

My mother's parents shared this industrious spirit. My grandmother was a homemaker and leader in her church. She had dreams of one day attending the Palmer Memorial Institute. My grandfather was a farmer and Elder at his church. He loved working on his farm. He passed away when I was very young, but I know he would be proud of me. They both retired from a hosiery mill in Burlington, NC.

When I work with minority farmers I often think of my grandfather and great grandfathers who did not have access to resources or government-sponsored programs to help them through the boom and bust times in the 20th century. It is no secret that minority farmers faced decades of discrimination and were blocked from federal or local programs and unable to raise capital from local banks.

## **Who is Natalie Murdock?**

I began my career right here in Durham, working with Chris Kromm at the Institute for Southern Studies. I furthered my career at the City of Asheville Economic Development Office and Advantage West Economic Development Group where I developed a passion for agribusiness. I learned more about the importance of regional economic development projects and their links to transportation, when I joined the Land-of-Sky Regional Council to work on urban and rural transportation projects. As a transportation planner, I developed a passion for government affairs and public engagement. I worked hard to make sure marginalized communities participated fully in the development of transportation projects.

I worked for the Town of Chapel Hill as a Grants Coordinator and GoTriangle where I served first as a Public Involvement Manager and then as Communications and Marketing Director. I worked to spearhead the Durham-Orange Light Rail Project and the Wake County Transit Plan.

As Traveling Press Secretary for the Deborah Ross for Senate campaign, I traveled across the state and then as Deputy Director of Communications and Community Outreach and Partnerships Manager for Attorney General Josh Stein.

I am a North Carolina native from Greensboro and have a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Communication Studies from UNC-Chapel Hill. I completed graduate work at Western Carolina University in Public Administration and in Leadership and Organizational Change at Pfeiffer University.

In 2017, I launched Murdock Anderson Consulting LLC where I currently serve as the Principal and Chief Strategist.

## **Why am I running for office?**

I have always been active in my community. In high school I worked with the local school board to make sure my school would not be demolished. In college as a leader in the Black Student Movement (BSM), I worked to register students to vote, raise the wages of our cafeteria workers and to expand the diversity of our academic advising department. These days, with our national leadership uninterested in helping our neighbors and our neighborhoods, community

activism is more important than ever. The “resistance” is local; it won’t be directed from Washington D.C., and we all need to do our part to reclaim our democracy. I’m running for office because I can help bring about the progressive change that we need. WE need progressive candidates to serve at all levels of government. Durham is the progressive beacon of the south and we have an obligation to build a strong bench of progressive leaders that can build a better future.

Soil and Water District Supervisors across the nation work to preserve our land, open spaces and drinking water. The Flint, Michigan water crisis teaches us not to take the quality of our drinking water for granted. And the prospect of a reduction in SNAP funds reminds us to fight for a Farm Bill that does not leave those in need behind.

I will work to ensure that movements such as farm-to-table are equitable and provide more opportunities for ALL. Now more than ever, it matters who we elect at the local level. As federal programs designed to help farmers and improve the environment are continuously under threat, we must do all that we can locally to keep those programs and goals alive and help our local farmers.

Helping local farmers helps the entire community. Right now, in Durham, over 40,000 people live in a food desert. As we address gentrification, let’s also address access to food; healthy and fresh food.

It’s an exciting time to be in agriculture. The face of farming is changing. There’s an entrepreneurial spirit in agribusiness which ignites my passion for the field. Take the example of Julius Tillery, a Durham resident and a 5th generation cotton farmer. He doesn’t just sell cotton; he has taken his product and repackaged it in different ways to generate additional profits, which he puts back into his farm and his community. This creativity has helped keep him out of the poverty that afflicts so many of our farmers, and I want to nurture this spirit to help farmers make the money they need to continue feeding America.

As an African-American woman I would be honored to carry on the strong tradition of diverse leadership on the Durham County Soil and Water Board. Stella Adams was elected as the first African-American female Soil and Water District Supervisor in the state; Commissioner Brenda Howerton was the second. Danielle

Adams served as one of only two African-American female Supervisors in the state when first elected. Agriculture is a multi-billion-dollar industry in North Carolina and we need to make sure a wide range of perspectives and backgrounds are at the table.

My platform - Our Soil, Our Water, Our Community, is more than a campaign slogan. It notes the intersection of food and our environment with our everyday lives. I want to work to serve local food at local restaurants and work with farmers to maximize their potential. I want to work with state and federal partners to increase state funding for programs that preserve and conserve our water. I also want to expand our partnerships with local schools to provide educational and training programs to get students excited about environmental stewardship and STEM.

Join me and fight for a better tomorrow, a better community and a better Durham, one harvest and one meal at a time.