

Testimony in Support of Honoring Rashida Hodge

Prepared Statement of Timothy Humphrey

Provost, Wake Technical Community College

Retired, IBM Senior Executive

Honorable Legislators and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of honoring Rashida Hodge. For more than fifteen years, I have witnessed her talent, character, leadership, and generosity. She is an extraordinary business leader whose success has created opportunities for others.

I bring the perspective of a 31-year technology career—25 years with IBM and six with Lenovo. Before retiring from IBM earlier this year, I held multiple executive roles, most recently serving as Chief Analytics Officer and Senior Executive for IBM in Research Triangle Park and North Carolina. I now serve as Provost at Wake Technical Community College and as Vice Chair of the NC State University Board of Trustees. Across technology, higher education, NC State, and the Research Triangle community, Rashida and I share many meaningful connections.

I first heard Rashida's name in 2010 from my mentor, Fran O'Sullivan, then General Manager of IBM's Supply Chain. After meeting Rashida during a trip to Slovakia, Fran called me simply to say, "Tim, you have to meet this talented leader." Fran is one of the best judges of talent and character I know, so her endorsement immediately caught my attention. When I returned to IBM in 2011 to lead supply chain strategy, I made recruiting Rashida one of my first priorities. Joining a leader she did not know required trust, and fortunately for our team, she took the leap of faith.

Working together, I quickly saw that Rashida combined strategic thinking with the discipline to turn ideas into results. She could enter an unfamiliar area, master the subject quickly, identify what mattered most, and bring people together to move complex work forward. She was equally comfortable developing strategy, working through difficult operational details, and communicating with senior executives. Rashida never relied on title or authority alone; she earned credibility by being prepared, asking the right questions, and consistently delivering on her commitments. Those abilities helped her thrive across very different parts of IBM and rise from college hire to vice president in just 16 years. Her advancement reflected intellectual agility, courage, an exceptional work ethic, and a consistent ability to earn trust while producing meaningful outcomes.

I also witnessed her determination when circumstances were difficult. Rashida has never been intimidated by a complex assignment or discouraged by an initial setback. She listens carefully, learns from the people closest to the work, and stays focused on the larger purpose. Just as important, she brings others along with her. Colleagues know that she will challenge them to perform at a high level, but they also know she will support them, advocate for them, and share credit for the team's success. That combination of high expectations and genuine investment in people is one of the clearest marks of her leadership.

What most distinguishes Rashida is how she uses leadership to serve others. She has consistently made time to mentor emerging leaders, provide candid counsel, and open doors that might otherwise remain closed. Our own relationship evolved from co-workers, to mentor and mentee, to close friends, and today the mentorship flows in both directions. When I face an important personal or professional decision, Rashida is one of the first people I call. I trust her because her judgment is grounded in wisdom, candor, integrity, and genuine concern for others. She listens without

judgment, tells me what I need to hear rather than simply what I want to hear, and remains present after the conversation. She has become as much a mentor to me as I have ever been to her.

Rashida's philanthropic spirit is equally inspiring. When she delivered the commencement address at NC State University, she did more than offer graduates words of encouragement—she announced a scholarship for students from the Virgin Islands to attend NC State. This past August, she hosted a dinner in my home for the first recipient as the student began her studies. Rashida wanted that young scholar not only to receive financial support, but also to feel welcomed, encouraged, and connected to a community invested in her success. Seeing a young Virgin Islander begin a new journey because Rashida transformed an idea into a tangible opportunity captured who Rashida is: she dreams boldly, follows through, and brings people together around the opportunities she creates.

Rashida Hodge is eminently worthy of this honor. She reflects the very best of the Virgin Islands: resilience, ambition, generosity, community, and an unwavering belief in what is possible. She has distinguished herself professionally without forgetting where she came from or her responsibility to those who will follow. I am proud to call her a former colleague, trusted counselor, and dear friend, and I respectfully urge the Legislature to recognize her extraordinary contributions and the example she continues to set. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.