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From the Triangle Business Journal:

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2022 Women in Business Awards: Tracy Doaks – MCNC

Mar 24, 2022, 11:00pm EDT

Category: Nonprofit leadership

Company: MCNC

Title: President and CEO

Birthplace: Front Royal, Virginia

Family: Spouse, Blaine; daughter, Nia, and son, Julian

Education: B.S., industrial engineering, N.C. State University



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Tracy Doaks

What accomplishments from the last year made you the most proud? I am most proud of the MCNC team's ability to persevere through the second year of the pandemic. Since connectivity and cybersecurity has become even more of a priority across our state, and the teams are busier than ever. Last year we completed a western expansion project with Facebook to help close the digital divide and connect several institutions from Forest City to Dobson.

Will the pandemic have a long-term impact on how you and your organization do business? The pandemic will forever change the work MCNC has done for 40-plus years. Broadband is now the priority for many, if not all, of the states across the U.S. Finding additional technology solutions to expand connectivity and cybersecurity for our clients is a key element for our continued success.

What is your professional goal five years from now? I have and will always deem myself a public servant. Being in a role with an organization that gives back to the community will be a priority. I would love to still be at MCNC! In five years, we will have executed our five-year plan and will be embarking on the next strategy.

What is the most difficult obstacle you've faced? Proving myself to myself! As a Black woman in an industry primarily dominated by white men, it was not the external threats that I worried about. It was the internal, daily fight to prove myself worthy to myself and others. That approach made finding my leadership style very difficult because I was trying to emulate what I saw rather than what I felt. It took decades for me to overcome that obstacle. But I did!

To what community cause or charity are you most committed? Corral Riding Academy, which works with high-risk girls, starting in middle school. The program includes tutoring, equine therapy and counseling. Joy Currey as founder and president shows commitment and passion for this work and I find it very heartening. The fact that 86 percent of these young ladies go on to college is a success story in itself.

What female businessperson or leader do you admire most? I truly admire Machelle Sanders, secretary of commerce for North Carolina. We served together in Gov. Roy Cooper's cabinet and I watched her from afar even before that time. Machelle never let the boundaries of state government impede her ability to help girls and people of color in STEM, chair the task force to improve health equity across the state, and work to ensure economic success in our communities.

What is something you are looking forward to this year? On a personal note, I am looking forward to traveling again! I have a

sister and nieces in London, so fingers crossed. In addition, I am looking forward to seeing how \$65 billion in federal broadband-related funding will benefit the rural communities of North Carolina.