



*Nomination for Patrice Funderburg, [Center for Community Transitions](#)  
Submitted by Kristine Goodyear, [Keeva Communications](#)*

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***New job title for nominee***

Uplifting Visionary for Social Justice

***How do you know the person you are nominating?***

I'm the communications consultant for the Center for Community Transitions (CCT), a Charlotte nonprofit organization founded in 1974 to help strengthen the community and reduce recidivism by providing people with criminal records and their families tools and resources to rebuild their lives. Patrice and I began working together in late 2019 when her role evolved from Board Member to Executive Director and I've been in awe of her since the first day we met.

***Describe the person you are nominating in only 3 words.***

Articulate, Visionary, Advocate

***Why does this person deserve to be named "40 Over 40"?***

The new decade also signified a new chapter for the Center for Community Transitions (CCT) when its executive director retired after leading the organization for three decades. Not only did Patrice Funderburg transition seamlessly from 20-year corporate human resources professional to a first-time nonprofit leader, but she also did it during a global pandemic.

Patrice never imagined vulnerability and nimble adaptability would emerge as a defining leadership skill during her first 90 days at CCT. The Charlotte nonprofit helps strengthen the community and reduce recidivism by providing people with criminal records and their families tools and resources to rebuild their lives.

Just a couple of months into her new role, Patrice navigated staff and budget reductions and led remote teams while still being (virtually) present and responsive to CCT clients and families, staff, board members and community partners. Being swept into an opportunity to lead with vulnerability in a new job sparked courage she believes could only have emerged during a disruption as unprecedented as COVID-19.

For Patrice, "Building People, Not Prisons" isn't just CCT's tagline. It's how she models her path to leading transformative change within the Charlotte community - lowering recidivism,

improving access and opportunities to sustainable employment, and disrupting the generational cycle of poverty to prison.

Patrice joined CCT's Board of Directors in 2017 and has spent years working and volunteering as an advocate and activist with people directly impacted by incarceration and correctional control. She led a social justice advisory services company to end institutional racism, taught classes and mentored women and girls at Mecklenburg County Detention Center, and served on the state's Reentry Council Collaborative and National Council of Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls.

Currently, Patrice is helping lead efforts to change the narrative around hiring people with criminal records through education, advocacy and highlighting the community-wide benefits of investing in this workforce talent pool.

According to Patrice, when people feel seen, heard and valued, they're able to navigate their own transformation. Through second chance employment, individuals with criminal records gain economic stability after release and aren't as likely to return to prison. This, she said, improves family stability and promotes public safety across the whole community.

As a social justice advocate with decades of experience and efforts, Patrice has improved access and opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals throughout the community, making her a well-earned recipient of The Charlotte Ledger 40 Over 40 for 2021.