

Bernadette Pelissier Bio

Bernadette Pelissier was born in Senegal, Africa of French parents. She came to the U.S. as an infant and spent most of her childhood in New Jersey. In her early teen years she lived in Damascus, Syria when her father worked for the United Nations.

She came to Chapel Hill in 1975 to study at UNC and received her Ph.D. in Sociology in 1980. Bernadette specialized in the evaluation of mental health programs in the community and in prison settings. She was the Director of Research and Evaluation for Durham County Community Mental Health Center from 1980 to 1985. She subsequently became Chief of Research at the Federal Correctional Institution in Butner and retired in 2006. During this period she was project director responsible for a staff of 17 for multi-center national projects evaluating drug treatment programs. She also directed a project evaluating a sex offender treatment program.

Dr. Pelissier has served on numerous boards and commissions: Orange County Planning Board, Commission for the Environment, Special Transit Advisory Committee, Shaping Orange County Future Task Force, the Carolina North Leadership Advisory Council, and the Community Leadership Collaboration. She has also served in several leadership roles as Chair of the Orange Chatham Sierra Club Group and as Chair of the OWASA board.

Dr. Pelissier began serving on the Orange County Board of Commissioners in December 2008. She has served as Chair of the OC Board of Commissioners, as well as serving on the Partnership for Young Children, and Board of Health. She currently serves on the Family Success Alliance, the Partnership to End Homelessness and GOTriangle. She also serves on the NC Association of County Commissioners' Environmental Steering Committee and Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee.