

## **REUNION SPEECH**

*Delivered by Charlie Gray '60 on the occasion of the Class of 1960 55<sup>th</sup> reunion – May 7, 2015*

**I HAVE ATTENDED MOST OF THE REUNIONS OF THE CLASS OF 1960 AND EVERYONE OF THEM HAS BEEN WELL ATTENDED AND A GREAT SUCCESS. THAT IS SOMEWHAT OF A SURPRISE SINCE MANY CLASSES STRUGGLE WITH THEIR REUNIONS OR DON'T HAVE THEM AT ALL. WHAT IS THE SECRET OF THE CLOSENESS OF THE CLASS OF 1960?**

**ABOUT 25 OR SO YEARS AGO, I HEARD A SERMON AT CHURCH AND THE MESSAGE WAS “ THERE IS SOMEONE IN YOUR LIFE THAT HAS HAD A PROFOUND EFFECT UPON YOU AND THAT YOU SHOULD SIT DOWN AND WRITE THEM A LETTER OF APPRECIATION”**

**I, WITHOUT HESITATION, IDENTIFIED THAT PERSON IN MY LIFE AND IMMEDIATELY WROTE THE LETTER OF THANKS. I FIRST MET THAT PERSON IN LATE 1955 WHEN WE WERE INTERVIEWING FOR A SCHOLARSHIP TO UNC. HE WAS A COUNTRY BUMKIN AND I WAS A COUNTRY BUMKIN. FOR THE NEXT 4 PLUS YEARS, OUR LIVES WAS INTERTWINED . WE WERE TOGETHER, AS ROOMATES, ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD, AT THE FRATERNITY HOUSE, IN CLASS, IN STUDENT GOVERNMENT AND EVERY FACIT OF CAROLINA LIFE. HE TAUGHT ME THAT LAUGHTER WAS THE GREATEST THERAPY IN LIFE. HE TAUGHT ME TO GREET EVERYONE, FROM THE**

**MOST IMPORTANT TO THE LEAST, AND TO GREET THEM WITH A SMILE AND A HANDSHAKE AND IF APPROPRIATE- A BIG HUG. HE TAUGHT ME TO PROD ON WHEN THINGS GOT TOUGH. HE TAUGHT ME HOW TO BE GENTILE YET FIRM. HE TAUGHT ME HOW TO SHOW HUMILITY IN THE FACE OF SUCCESS.**

**AFTER GRADUATION, EXCEPT FOR HIS BEING A GROOMSMAN IN MY WEDDING, OUR LIVES WENT THEIR SEPARATE WAYS. I'M NOT SURE I WAS ABLE TO PRACTICE WHAT I LEARNED FROM HIM, BUT I TRIED. WE WOULD SEE EACH OTHER AT REUNIONS AND BAR FUNCTIONS AND RELIVE OLD TIMES. WHAT I FOUND FROM THESE MEETINGS IS THAT HE HAD NOT CHANGED. IN THE FACE OF GREAT SUCCESS, HE WAS STILL JOYOUS, HUMBLE AND GRACIOUS.**

**I KNOW THIS PERSON HAS ALSO EFFECTED MANY OF YOU IN THIS ROOM – WHO CALL HIM A DEAR FRIEND.**

**I DON'T KNOW IF I EVER SENT THAT LETTER 25 YEARS AGO BUT TONIGHT I WANT TO SEND IT IN PERSON. I WANT ALL OF YOU TO RISE WITH ME AND TOAST THE PERSON WHO HAS HELD OUR CLASS TOGETHER, WHO HAS MADE OUR REUNIONS A SUCCESS, AND WHO HAS HELPED MAKE CAROLINA A SPECIAL PLACE IN OUR HEARTS – MY GOOD FRIEND AND YOURS – OUR CLASS PRESIDENT**

**WADE SMITH**

**TO WADE**