

CHARLIE JUSTICE '50— A Life magazine cover said it all more than 30 years ago: “Choo Choo Spells Football in ‘49.” The inside description continued — “All the residents of Chapel Hill, N. C., and many citizens of other communities think Choo Choo is the best collegiate player in the world.”

Fame followed the young tailback, Charlie Justice, from his Asheville high school days through the Bainbridge Naval Base team and to his enrollment at Chapel Hill in 1946.

The glories of the name Charlie Justice still call up memories in the minds and throbs in the hearts of Tar Heel fans who watched him play. Several of his Carolina records still stand: Total yardage gained — 4,883 yards; touchdowns by rushing and passing — 65; punting — 42.5 yards average on 251 punts.

Choo Choo was a two-time All-American tailback, All-Southern choice for four years, runner-up for the Heisman Trophy, and led the Tar Heels to their first three bowl games with a 32-9-2 record in his UNC career. His No. 22 jersey was retired

After working for the Medical Foundation at Chapel Hill, he played four years for the Washington Redskins where he also set new records, then entered private business. In 1964 he formed an insurance organization in Asheville, later moving to Greensboro. He now heads Charlie Justice and Associates there and is principal owner of the Tar Heel Motor Club.

His contributions to college football have been recognized in later years — with induction into the National Football Hall of Fame, and the naming of the UNC-Asheville sports complex for him.

Charlie Justice, perhaps more than any alumnus of the University other than those in its direct employment, has given his time and his boundless affection to the alumni body of his alma mater. A Life Member of the Alumni Association — number 2200 by chance — he has been a director of the General Alumni Association and an alumni representative on the Athletic Council and travels throughout the state as a speaker at alumni chapter meetings.

The words “distinguished service” are particularly fitting in the presentation to this humble, yet dynamic, son of Carolina — Charlie Justice.