

# Elmer Eugene Jackson '55

We read that fund-raisers need to be especially creative in these uncertain financial times. Gene Jackson is creative by nature and he appears to have been born to put that gift, combined with a warmth for people, to work for Carolina. Thus the University is enriched both financially and through participation in University life by thousands of alumni who gave millions of dollars because they accepted the gentle persuasion of Gene Jackson.

Or perhaps because they ride motorcycles. It is a documented fact that Gene runs a motorcycle club consisting of senior citizens. Because many of these senior bikers are Carolina alumni and because some very generous gifts have come from members of this club, it was rumored around Chapel Hill for a while that a gift to Carolina was a rite of initiation if you wanted to bike with Gene's "Easy Riders." Now *that's* creative fund-raising!

Gene took his UNC diploma and headed to Florida where for several years he was an advertising executive. But even at that distance he could hear Tar Heel voices calling him back.

Gene came home, and in 1974 was named associate director of what was then called Alumni Annual Giving.

Associate Vice Chancellor William P. Massey '68 worked with him and said, "I think Gene's exceptional talent is his ability to understand that people love and care about Carolina in different ways. His ability to nourish and encourage that attachment has been exceptional."

In 1976 Gene initiated the Senior Class Gift program, perhaps the most successful of its kind in the country. He helped develop the parents' program into an important fund-raising arm of the development office. And Gene puts his own money where his heart is; when the Chancellor's Club was begun in 1982, Gene was the first person from the administration or the faculty to join.

When thinking of Gene and his career devoted to keeping Carolina strong, his friend Larry Goldrich '47 has recalled the old adage that says, "You are a wealthy man if you are able to count your good friends on the fingers of one hand." Gene needs many hands. He lives his life surrounded by devoted Carolina friends. He is wealthy in spirit because of them, and Carolina is wealthier because of Gene Jackson—and his work in bringing others back home to Carolina.

Last year Gene retired as director of the Carolina Fund—an organization responsible for collecting gifts from alumni to the University. His many friends have honored him by establishing a scholarship in his name.

Gene has described the feeling he gets out on the open road riding his Harley Davidson as a "natural high." Knowing Gene and following his career of working magic for the enhancement of Carolina through personal warmth, friendship and love of alma mater is also a natural high.