

# Raymond Lewis Jeffries Jr. '47

Once upon a time, Ray Jeffries was Associate Dean of Students at the State University of New York at New Paltz. Nothing very surprising about that — it was a natural progression for him, after serving for 14 years as assistant to the dean of student affairs at his alma mater Carolina and then receiving a masters degree in guidance and student personnel from Columbia University. And after four years at New Paltz, Ray resigned to come home to North Carolina. Nothing very surprising about that, either. Many Carolina alumni at some time or another left North Carolina only later to return to the Tar Heel State.

But here comes the surprising part — surprising if you don't know Ray well: the year after he left New Paltz, the students dedicated the school year book to him. Aren't year books dedicated to a school's grand old man or grand old dame? Here, an outsider, a Southerner, present at the school only four years, received the dedication.

To those who know Ray Jeffries, the dedication fits perfectly.

His former boss, retired UNC System President William C. Friday '48 says: "Ray Jeffries has never known a stranger. His warm and gracious manner and his uncompromising love for the University make him one of her greatest ambassadors in the whole world."

His friend Roy Holsten '50, retired associate dean of the School of Business at Carolina, describes Ray as "the Carolina alumnus who is perhaps best known personally by more current and former students, faculty, administrators, and alumni than any other. He was helping students in the dean of students office when *he* was a student, and that attitude continues to this day." One colleague of his commented that "Ray could walk down the street in Outer Mongolia and meet someone he knew." That friendly personality has graced the Chancellor's box in Kenan Stadium where alumni and visitors have been welcomed and hosted by Ray Jeffries for countless fall Saturdays.

After returning to North Carolina, Ray served for 22 years as Associate Director for Student Development Services in the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges. His job description covered five typed pages. In short, he oversaw recruitment, admissions, testing, financial aid, registration, student records, counseling, student activities, placement, and alumni affairs for a system that, by the time he retired in 1989, served more than a half million students each year.

It was a job that could swamp an ordinary person in paper and numbers. Not Ray Jeffries. He brought to a bureaucratic position the dedication to the best interests of young people that earned him that dedication back in New Paltz. He brought caring. "I look for the loners," he once said of this rare personal quality. "I don't like to see a kid by himself. You've got to pat them on the back. We don't praise people enough for what they do."

He founded the community college system's student government organization to bring some of that philosophy into action. "Some of these kids have never been to a banquet before with a white table cloth. For some of them, this is their first time in a hotel. I get personal satisfaction from watching young people grow."

His last boss, former Governor Robert Scott, president of the community college system, says this: "Ray Jeffries gives of himself, his time and his talent to others. He sees the best in all people. He always speaks well of others. He can be as at ease with the First Lady of this country as with a college freshman. He is devoted to his personal family and to his North Carolina family. He is my friend."

We don't praise people enough for what they do. But today we can make up for that, just a little, in the case of Ray Jeffries.