

Thomas Willis Lambeth '57

His love for North Carolina is rooted deep in time. The Lambeths have been Tar Heels since the 1760s.

His love for North Carolina is not a blind love. His degree from UNC in 1957 was in North Carolina history. He was born in Clayton and graduated from high school in Statesville. Tom has worked professionally in Winston-Salem, Greensboro and Raleigh. He has traveled through every crossroads and hamlet on countless political swings and missions of philanthropy.

His love for North Carolina is not a narrow love. He remembers one friend quipping that you could build a wall around the state and Tom Lambeth would never notice, and he has described himself as "one of the most awfully provincial people you'll ever meet." While admired and respected for his honesty, Tom Lambeth is not shooting straight on that one. He is nationally renowned in the rarified stratum of philanthropic foundation leadership. He was universally recognized after a decade in Washington as one of the most able administrators on Capitol Hill. He was for a short stint in 1977 the director of the Select Committee on Assassinations of the United States House of Representatives. No wonder he was in 1988 recognized by our University with a Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Tom's love for North Carolina is not a selfish love. His wife Donna '60 says that Tom "has a very special sense of duty and responsibility about the state. He absolutely loves it. It probably influences every decision he ever makes, outside of family decisions."

After a brief stint as a newspaper reporter at the *Winston-Salem Journal* following graduation and Army service, Tom Lambeth set out on a career of service to North Carolina. The point of departure was the just-starting gubernatorial campaign of Terry Sanford '39, then a Fayetteville lawyer. On Sanford's inauguration, Lambeth, at the tender age of 26, joined what came to be known as "Terry's kindergarten." He was the youngest chief assistant to a governor in the nation.

After four years of running the governor's office, Tom joined the staff of the Smith Richardson Foundation in Greensboro and in 1969 went to Washington as the chief assistant to newly-elected Congressman L. Richardson Preyer. In 1978, he came home to what he describes as "the best job in North Carolina." He is executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, the most Tar Heel of philanthropic

organizations. By the very terms of its founding, the income available to the Foundation, now totalling about \$10 million per year, must be spent solely in North Carolina. Under Tom's leadership, the Foundation has supported projects in every county of the state. Major beneficiaries include the North Carolina Museum of Art, the state zoo, Wake Forest University, Duke University, St. Augustine's College, and each of the 16 campuses that form The University of North Carolina System.

This career of service to North Carolina in a professional capacity is matched by a devotion of personal service, largely through the University of North Carolina. With the sponsorship of his good friend the late Hargrove "Skipper" Bowles '39, Tom became a member of the board of trustees of the old Consolidated University. He was an early chairman of the new board of trustees of The University of North Carolina. He is a past president of the General Alumni Association and in 1990 in recognition of his distinguished service to our University, the Trustees presented him a William Richardson Davie Award.

Tom Lambeth has translated his love of North Carolina into a lifetime of service. With a smile he acknowledges that his work with the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation is a source of joy, even at the simplest level: "People like for you to give them money," he says. If giving away money has been his great professional joy, giving service to our University and our Association has been Tom's greatest volunteer passion.

Today we recognize his greatest gift: Tom Lambeth keeps giving us himself.