

Charles Felix Harvey III '43

DSM

In Eastern North Carolina, roots go no deeper than Felix Harvey's, wingspans no broader. Yes, there was that stint in the Peachtree Street office tower as President of Georgia International — and the sticky negotiations in London and Amsterdam with International Telephone and Telegraph — but even those experiences trace right back to Kinston. And when the first cargo plane loaded with North Carolina products takes off from the Global TransPark, Felix Harvey's reach will have embraced the world.

The story begins in the insurance business, in 1871, when Felix's great-grandfather founded L. Harvey & Son. Lemuel Harvey soon expanded into farm commodities, hardware, clothing, and many other lines. C. Felix Harvey, Sr. joined the business in 1892, and C. Felix Harvey, Jr. came into the firm in 1916, succeeding his dad as president when Leo Harvey, little Felix's uncle, took over the business. Leo was for decades a leader in business and public affairs, serving as county commissioner and as president of the North Carolina Citizens Association. He taught Felix about business and he served for Felix as a model of responsible citizenship.

Uncle Leo was able to offer Felix something else that his father would have provided had he lived: a love of The University of North Carolina. Felix Sr., Felix Jr., and Leo were all Carolina men, the oldest of them from the class of 1892. It was natural then, that Felix III would follow that path, and that he would study business, graduating in 1943.

After wartime service in the Navy, Felix returned to Kinston to join Leo in the business still known as L. Harvey & Son. As Lemuel had done early on, Leo had overseen the expansion of that business, into all sorts of enterprises. Leo and Felix made an energetic and successful team, but Felix introduced a twist.

Back at Carolina, Felix had gone into business picking up and delivering laundry, but, as he later remembered, he was outmatched by classmate Skipper Bowles. Bowles seemed to have more fun and Felix learned why: "Skipper had 10 people working for him, so he didn't have to do as much, and he was making more money than I was. In producing, it multiplies your success."

Felix put that principle to work back home. He spotted business opportunities and people with the drive and skills to take advantage of them. He provided the responsibility ("I believe in letting them run things without a lot of interference from the top") and the means. The results have been spectacular. Companies under his control proved successful in trucking, dairy products, bulk storage, and many other fields.

One of his efforts was the Life Insurance Company of North Carolina, a company he founded in line with great-granddad's heritage. In 1993 it merged with giant Georgia International, which soon developed a big problem with International Telephone and Telegraph. Georgia International tapped Felix to be its president, and he fought the fight with ITT, turning a \$2.8 million investment into a \$38 million sale.

But two years of commuting weekly to Atlanta were enough, and Felix refocused his time and efforts in North Carolina, serving, as Uncle Leo had, as president of the North Carolina Citizens Association, and serving, in Uncle Leo's tradition, as a member of the Kinston school board, the Kinston Industrial Development Commission, and the High Point College board of trustees, among many others.

And he has shared his generosity with the University, in the tradition of his father, who, at his untimely death was both a member of the Board of Trustees and president of the General Alumni Association. Felix served for a year as president of the Educational Foundation and as president of the Business Foundation of North Carolina, which supports the business school. In 1988 Felix and members of his family made a very generous gift to the George Watts Hill Alumni Center to fund The Carolina Club reception area where there hangs a portrait of Felix's grandfather, Felix Harvey, Sr.

In retirement now, Felix Harvey serves, for the salary of \$1 per year, as president of the Global TransPark Foundation, looking to make that dream a reality. And with Felix's record of success, we know he will, for his eastern North Carolina roots are as deep as his love for his University and his wingspan can surely embrace yet another great challenge.