

# Edward Hooper Hardison '55

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Anyone who saw Ned Hardison play football at Woodberry Forest caught a glimpse of the fierce determination that still simmers below his self-effacing demeanor.

"If you tried to get in his way, you'd have an unusual afternoon," says Roddey Dowd '54, who went on to Carolina and to the Army with Ned and spent 39 years working alongside him at Charlotte Pipe and Foundry. "He was tough as hell. He was a good athlete, very good. And he never backed down."

Ned was a halfback, a freshman starter, and he once ran into the line with such force that he broke both his hands. He was out for the rest of the season, both his arms in casts. Such was his presence – not in physical size, but in motivation.

Choosing Carolina was almost predestined. His father graduated from the University in 1916, and his older brother Jimmy in 1951. Ned followed them even to Old East. His three children have continued the family's Carolina tradition.

After a two-year stint in the Army, Ned joined Charlotte Pipe and Foundry and rose to president and CEO, before retiring in September 1998 to serve on the company's advisory board.

His undergraduate experience forged a bond between Ned and Carolina and an unshakable belief in the University's ability to unleash the potential of the students and the state. He has built on that foundation in the past 44 years by working selflessly in support of the campus, the Arts and Sciences Foundation, the Kenan-Flagler Business School, and as a member and chair of both the Educational Foundation and the General Alumni Association.

Ned's dedication in each endeavor has been to the same simple goal: to make the University the best it can be. And he's conducted that work quietly and with few accolades. Watching as others have been honored, Ned has willingly avoided the spotlight. "He made sure things went very smoothly at the GAA," says Anne Cates '53, "and I have seen him handle difficult issues on other boards. It is not always easy to do the right thing. I don't know of any alumnus more dedicated than Ned Hardison."

"He is a strong and quiet, but very effective leader," says Moyer Smith '61, who has worked closely with Ned at the Educational Foundation.

Those who know Ned understand that it is his innate integrity – what Winston Churchill defined as never giving in "except to convictions of honor and good sense" – that guide him. He has shown the same sense of purpose working with his church, the Virginia Theological Seminary, the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center and other civic and community causes.

Perhaps two of his oldest friends sum up best Ned's contribution and character.

"Ned has never been blown off course by the winds of popular opinion," Dick Spangler '54 says. "His integrity, his insight, his foresight make him unique. There are many of us who receive honors of which we may be undeserving. Ned's honors are all justified and too few."

He is, Roddey Dowd says, an exemplary human being in a world filled with trifling folks.