

1/14/11

Remarks on Receiving the General Alumni Association's Faculty Service Award

Hearing such a wonderful citation makes me think of the Lost Colony. I first saw it in 1948 when Andy Griffith was playing St. Walter Raleigh. Toward the end, Old Tom is marching across the parapet, guarding the fort, and says to himself "Verily, Tom, I hardly know thee in thy greatness."

What a magnificent compliment it is to be singled out from among 3,600 faculty colleagues for the Faculty Service Award, and how humbling it is that this is the work of the alumni of this great institution.

Carolina has been the focus of my life for as long as I can remember. My father's Carolina diploma hung on the wall in our house next to the piano. It hangs in my office today. It's signed by J.C.B. Ehringhaus and Frank Porter Graham. The first family trip we took after the end of gasoline rationing in 1948 was to Chapel Hill. That was a long way from Elizabeth City, and we made it there and back on the same day. We came for a football game with William and Mary. I was just as puzzled at what was happening on the field as Andy was when he found it that "What it wuz wuz football." My father seemed very excited about some fellow named Charlie Justice. I was more impressed with two other things I had never seen: red dirt and rocks.

It was taken for granted that when the time came I would go to The University. That's what most people in Elizabeth City called it. Wake Forest and Duke fans called it Chapel Hill, but we marked that down as ignorance. Lucky for me, in 1956 just about any North Carolina high school graduate could get admitted. But, I remember Chancellor House saying to the entire freshman class assembled in Memorial Hall: Look around you boys (and back then he meant BOYS). Chances

are the fellow on your left won't be back after the Christmas holidays, and the fellow on your right won't be back next fall. So work hard and make sure you're not one of them. I took his advice.

I have served for nearly 47 years on the faculty. It's the only job I have ever held, and the only one I ever wanted. I had the great privilege of serving in the School of Government, carrying out Edward Kidder Graham's ambition to make the University coterminous with the boundaries of the State. Unlike others who have received your Faculty Service Award, I never taught a single one of you here on campus. After you left Carolina to serve in the General Assembly, or on a board of county commissioners, or a city council, or as a county attorney, or as a city or county manager, or a tax assessor, I taught you some law and learned from you how it works in practice. I learned more from those encounters than you did. I was doing what we have been doing in the School of Government since 1933 when Albert Coates realized that the law in books and the law in action were often not the same thing.

Although I knew Mr. Coates, I finished Law School while he was no longer teaching and joined the Institute faculty after he had retired from administration. When returned to the University in 1964 after a brief exile in New Haven, the work that Coates had begun was being developed, refined, and extended by a remarkable faculty of about 15 under the leadership of John Sanders. John's work has been built to new heights by Mike Smith.

In recent years, Chancellor Moeser reawakened Carolina's faculty to our mission to encourage more interaction between scholarship in the library and the laboratory and the world outside the academy. Today that's called "engaged

scholarship." You will hear that term again. When you do, think "School of Government."

I accept your Faculty Service Award tonight in the name of all my many colleagues over the past three-quarters of a century who, inspired by the vision of Albert Coates, took up President Graham's call and have left North Carolina a better place than they found. It's been a great ride. I have enjoyed every minute of it.

Thank you.