

# Joyce Lee Fitzpatrick '76

Think a situation through and then take a wise risk. If you fail, collect yourself and try again. If you succeed, give something back. That is the way Joyce Fitzpatrick is ordering her life, and she believes it is a way that the University should operate, as well.

When Joyce was a girl in Kernersville, few women held prominent positions. One who did was a journalist, the food editor of the *Winston-Salem Journal*. When the journalist would entertain other food writers in her home, young Joyce would set the table, mix the vinaigrette, serve the sherry, and listen with open ears to the talk of deadlines, office politics, and the world of work. How fortunate this journalist was, Joyce concluded, to be paid to do what she so clearly loved.

Experiences like that propelled Joyce Fitzpatrick to the Journalism School at Carolina, and to a campus career in communications, as editor of the *Yackety Yack* and associate editor of *The Daily Tar Heel* (winning, along the way, the Frank Porter Graham Award, presented to seniors who have made outstanding contributions to the University community).

Immediately after graduation, she joined Hunter Publishing Company in Winston-Salem as an editor and graphic designer, and then moved to Washington, D.C., to work as an editor for the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

In 1981, Fitzpatrick recognized the time for the wise risk. With another woman, she formed Peabody/Fitzpatrick, a public relations firm, developing extensive expertise in higher education, health, and the environment. The enterprise succeeded mightily.

In 1988, Peabody/Fitzpatrick landed its first North Carolina account, hired by the UNC business school to enhance its national prestige and to reach its \$30 million bicentennial fund raising goal. This was a wonderful opportunity on two principal scores. First, association with the business school brings contact with many businesses—and potential clients. And second, since North Carolina had always remained close to Fitzpatrick's heart, this was an opportunity to return home. After three years of a grueling split between the Peabody/Fitzpatrick Washington office and the growing North Carolina business, Fitzpatrick was able to relocate here, opening the Raleigh office of the firm. This risk also proved quite wise. Just about the same time, Ruder Finn, a New York-based international public relations firm, was feeling the pinch of serving its Research Triangle client Glaxo without a North Carolina office. In 1991, Peabody/Fitzpatrick merged with Ruder Finn, and Fitzpatrick became the head of its Raleigh office.

Success can create the obligation to give back. It is in this sense of obligation that Joyce Fitzpatrick most stands out above the crowd, with her efforts on behalf of Planned Parenthood, the Lucy Daniels Foundation, the Wake Education Foundation, the North Carolina Society, the North Carolina Day Care Facility Task Force, the finance council of the Democratic National Committee, and the board of North Carolina for World Languages and Cultures.

The University is the chief beneficiary of this sense of obligation. In 1991, Fitzpatrick told the *Triangle Business Journal* that her Chapel Hill experience set her on the path to success. "The University is really a remarkable place," she said. "I'm motivated to use my talents to help tell that story. I'm terrifically proud." She has served as president of the Journalism Alumni and Friends Association, as a member of the board of the General Alumni Association, as chair of the communications task force and now as

outgoing chair of the Board of Visitors. Her goal in that role has been to try to push the University back into the risk-taking postures necessary to make the University stronger today and for the future.

Risk, succeed, and give back. Joyce works to encourage her generation to become the effective leaders and risk takers needed to build the University and focus its direction for the next century.