

Maurice John Koury '48

Growing things flourish on Maurice Koury's watch.

The family business is the best example. Mom and dad immigrated from Lebanon and settled in Alamance County. In 1945, Maurice, just out of Burlington High School, was packing his bags for Chapel Hill. At that same moment, older brother Ernest, just out of the Army Air Force, came home to Burlington and identified an underserved niche in the hosiery manufacturing industry. Ernest set up shop in the basement of the family home and started cranking out the hosiery. Maurice hit the books. Within four years, Koury Hosiery Mills, Inc., had outgrown the basement and was ready to receive Maurice, armed with his new B.S. in chemistry. Serving in capacities such as plant superintendent—in charge of production—Maurice dedicated himself to the business that became Carolina Hosiery Mills, Inc., now in the Alamance Industrial Park. Today, it is a major North Carolina industrial leader, and Maurice is its president.

Many of the public examples of Maurice Koury's capacity to enhance growing things are embraced right here at The University of North Carolina.

Take, for instance, endowed chairs that might or might not come to be. The General Assembly set aside funds for endowing professorships at UNC System campuses, but they could be used only if other sources matched these funds and then matched them again. In January 1987, Chancellor Fordham announced that Maurice Koury had done that, matching \$167,000 in state funds with a \$333,000 gift to endow the Edna J. Koury Distinguished Professorship in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Take, for instance, the campaign to raise the money to build the George Watts Hill Alumni Center in which we are now gathered. That drive got just the additional boost it needed when, in November 1987, well before construction began, Maurice Koury donated a quarter of a million dollars. The result of that gift and others like it are now apparent.

Take, for instance, the momentum to create a facility for student activities that had outgrown beloved old Carmichael Auditorium, especially Tar Heel basketball. In 1983, there was no Smith Center, only a dream for a facility unparalleled anywhere, when Maurice entered his second term as president of the Educational Foundation, Inc. The first term, 1972-73, was, characteristically, a time now remembered for growth and success. But it was the second term that was to yield the lasting monument.

By universal consensus, Maurice's role is recognized as a major factor in the successful raising of \$34 million for the Dean E. Smith Student Activities Center and natatorium complex. His reputation for integrity and personal generosity were magnets and spurs for the gifts of others.

Today on campus, students go to *Wilson* Library for special research projects, or to *Lenoir* Hall for lunch between classes, to *Fetzer* gym for a workout. The tribute behind these names is passed on with every casual use, and with the use of *Manning* and *Joyner* and *Davie* and *Fordham*. The name *Koury* has joined this list. People who never before knew what a natatorium was now speak regularly of the Koury Natatorium.

The natatorium exists in its present form—with advanced lighting and sound systems, jet-free circulation system eliminating currents, million-gallon capacity four times the size of venerable old Bowman Gray Pool that it succeeds—largely because of Maurice's able leadership of the Educational Foundation at the most crucial of the fund-raising stages.

Two-time University trustee, officer of the General Alumni Association, generous friend, Maurice Koury is a servant of The University of North Carolina. It is our great pleasure to recognize and honor his distinguished service.

The University is a growing thing. May it continue to flourish under the watchful eye, and guiding hand, of Maurice John Koury.