

Richard Yates Stevens '70

Wake County is clearly home. The roots are so deep there. Grandfather was a justice of the peace and chairman of the school board, a sworn deputy and elected judge in the Swift Creek community. A house in mother's family built in the county before the Revolutionary War stood until the 1970s. Uncle William donated land for what became the Hemlock Bluffs Nature Preserve in Cary. Mom and dad met as students at Cary High School in the 1920s, and young Richard Stevens would have attended Cary High, too, if redistricting in the sixties had not taken him to Broughton High in Raleigh.

Yes, Wake County is clearly home. The current connection is about as strong as a connection can be. The county manager, after all, is vital to the county.

But there must have been a time when Chapel Hill seemed like home.

Maybe that time came during the undergraduate years. Those were the years, after all, when Richard was chairman of the Residence College Federation and vice chairman of the Chancellor's Committee on University Residential Life, the years when he was inducted into the Orders of the Old Well, the Golden Fleece, and the Society of Janus, was elected to a campuswide student government office, and received the Roger A. Davis Memorial Award for outstanding service to the University.

Or maybe Chapel Hill began to feel like home during those couple of years right after graduation when Richard was lured into University administration as assistant dean of men at Carolina—it might be nice, Richard thought, to be a college president some day. Educational campuses are exciting places," Richard later said, recalling those deanship days. "They are places of thought and research, stimulation of ideas and ideals. I enjoyed it."

That Richard enjoyed being on campus was soon to appear an understatement. From administration he went back to student status, dedicating the next seven years to study, emerging with both a law degree and a master's degree in public administration.

Arriving as an undergraduate in 1966 and leaving 12 years later with three degrees in hand; if ever Chapel Hill was going to be home, then was the time.

But by the time that third degree was in hand, Richard was already serving as budget director for the city of Durham, so Durham had become home, right? No. While he was helping the folks in Durham decide how much of their money they would spend for what services, Richard was living in Raleigh. That's Wake County, you know.

So it should have come as a surprise to no one when Richard joined his professional identity with his historical one in 1980 and returned to Wake County to work, starting as assistant county manager. And, it should have come as a surprise to no one familiar with his educational record, with his record in Durham administration, and with his accomplishments on the job in Wake—"He's got a sense of judgment in county-related matters that is superior," one commissioner said—when Richard, at age 35, became the youngest manager of a large North Carolina county. Today he remains the Wake County manager, overseeing an annual budget in excess of \$350 million a year.

And while Wake is home, the appearance that Carolina might have Richard Stevens for keeps—an appearance that raised its head in those days in the office of the dean of men—has not been an illusion. Because of his dedication to the University, Carolina has had him for keeps. As early as 1977, before the final degree was in hand, he wrote to the Alumni Association, to express his hopes that recent alumni would be more financially forthcoming in support of the University, and outlining his efforts to make it so.

In the years since, his service has been unceasing. He has served as General Alumni Association representative from the MPA alumni; as GAA director; as GAA treasurer; and on the Board of Directors of the Carolina Alumni Club, Inc. He is a member of the UNC Board of Visitors and has served on the Board of Visitors of the UNC School of Social Work. He has served as advance gifts chairman of Carolina Annual Giving. He is a member of the Bell Tower Society.

We are not sure that GAA Assistant Treasurer Anne Cates '53 understands Richard's Wake County connection. When she speaks of his wise guidance, his financial acumen, his dedication to the University and the GAA, she always ends by saying, "And he's just always there. Always available when we need him."

Wake may be home, but Chapel Hill took a piece of his heart and has kept it. The University is the lasting beneficiary.