

William Preston Aycock II '65

Some, they say, are born with silver spoons in their mouths. Bill Aycock must have come into the world with tar on his heels and a lawyer's briefcase in his hands.

Born in Alabama, Bill came to Carolina while still in diapers. Part of his growing up was in Victory Village. Polk Place was his backyard, Woollen Gym his playground; Emerson Field was Bill's sandlot, the brick walkways his sidewalk to school and church. When he joined the student body, most people didn't know his father was the chancellor, and he would be the last to tell them.

A dedicated student and Eagle Scout, Bill applied himself to his books, Navy ROTC, campus politics and intramurals before graduating in 1965. He also found time to woo his wife of 33 years, Alexa, a 1966 Carolina graduate.

After two years of active duty in the U.S. Navy on an anti-submarine destroyer, Bill returned to Chapel Hill to enter law school—following another seemingly preordained path. He had spent countless hours as a child at the law library, and his father likes to say that Bill learned to count from the spines of case compilations he fetched.

Bill finally left Chapel Hill in 1970, joining a growing Greensboro law firm and becoming its managing partner before leaving to become a founding partner of another firm. He kept close ties with the University, though, joining the Educational Foundation and keeping a close eye on his beloved Tar Heel teams. He taught courses in real estate practice at the law school for several years, served on the school's alumni board and chaired the Greensboro district Morehead Award Selection Committee.

Perhaps the one activity in Bill's life that has rivaled his devotion to Carolina is his passion for youth soccer. Bill coached a girls team for 11 years, following his daughter and many of her teammates from first grade through high school graduation and serving an instrumental role in developing Greensboro's youth soccer complex. He often put his coaching duties ahead of billable hours for his law firm — and even broke a nearly 25-year streak of attending Carolina home football games for the soccer team.

Excited by the possibility of helping Carolina continue its great tradition of bringing together the residents of North Carolina in an atmosphere of vitality, purpose and respect, Bill rededicated himself to the University in the early 1980s by becoming active in the General Alumni Association. He has served continuously on the board for seven years, doing whatever was needed, serving in uncelebrated ways and providing invaluable volunteer legal advice. That dedication led to his selection as GAA chair in 1999.

His classmate Bob Spearman '65 recalls one of the few times Bill strayed from Tar Heel soil, a summer adventure to the Pacific Northwest to drive a tractor for the Green Giant food company. Like his father, Bill Aycock has been a giant in light blue as well, and the GAA and the University are indeed fortunate to have what his former neighbor Bill Friday '48 (LLB) calls "a superior leader of his generation."