



*Gayle Stott Lowry/Chowan County Courthouse*

**North Carolina State Bar  
2021 Fifty-Year Lawyers Luncheon, Class of 1971  
April 22, 2022 ■ Raleigh, NC**



## Welcome

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Although later than originally planned, today we are pleased to gather in-person to honor the members of the class of 1971, who, during the social distancing necessitated by the delta variant of the coronavirus pandemic, marked the 50th anniversary of their admission to the North Carolina State Bar last year. These remarkable lawyers entered the legal profession during a time of significant cultural and political events: just weeks before they graduated from law school, the US Supreme Court ruled, in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, that the busing of students may be ordered to achieve racial desegregation; while the new graduates were

studying for the bar exam, The *New York Times* began to publish the Pentagon Papers; shortly before they sat for the bar exam, President Richard Nixon formally certified the 26th Amendment to the US Constitution, lowering the voting age from 21 to 18; not long after the results of that exam were announced, Disney World opened in Orlando, Florida; and, after their first months of licensure, the digital age took a giant leap forward with Intel's release of the world's first microprocessor, the Intel 4004. The 50th year of practice for the lawyers of the class of 1971 also brought transition and challenge: law practice went remote as lawyers learned how to live and work safely during a

pandemic and then learned that hybrid law practice might improve the work/life balance of many lawyers; meanwhile, the profession's core belief in the rule of law met many challenges including a threat to the peaceful transition of presidential power.

The lawyers we honor today have worked throughout their careers, one client and one case at a time, to advance the administration of justice and the rule of law. Through it all, they have employed their legal training diligently, proficiently, and imaginatively to make life better for their fellow citizens. Please join us in celebrating their many contributions to our profession and our world.

## Agenda

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### Welcome and Introduction of Head Table and Special Guests

Darrin Jordan, President

### Invocation

Todd Brown, Vice-President

### Lunch

### Recognition of Fifty-Year Lawyers

Darrin Jordan, President

### Introduction of Speaker

Darrin Jordan, President

### Remarks

The Honorable Richard Doughton,  
Superior Court Emergency Judge, Honoree

### Closing Remarks

Darrin Jordan, President

## John B. McMillan Distinguished Service Award Recipients

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Shelby D. Benton, Goldsboro  
Rebecca J. Britton, Fayetteville  
Lisa S. Costner, Winston-Salem

Judge Robert H. Hobgood, Louisburg  
B. Geoffrey Hulse, Goldsboro  
J. Anderson Little, Chapel Hill

Linda M. McGee, Corolla  
Reid L. Phillips, Greensboro  
Thomas W. Ross, Davidson

## Fifty-Year Lawyers

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W. Thad Adams III  
Gardner H. Altman Jr.  
Jon E. Anderson  
Frank D. Armstrong Jr.  
Rudolph A. Ashton III  
Fred P. Baggett  
Sarah Patterson Bailey  
John R. Ball  
Turner W. Battle Jr.  
Michael R. Becker  
Thomas I. Benton  
William M. Bernstein  
Carlton Coleman Billingsley Jr.  
Shelley Blum  
John Michael Booee  
George W. Boylan  
Joan G. Brannon  
Thomas P. Brim  
Donald E. Britt Jr.  
Bertram Ervin Brown II  
Kenney S. Buckhalt Jr.  
Walter Edward Busby  
Michael R. Butler  
Thomas J. Caldwell  
R. Stephen Camp  
Eugene B. Cannon  
Philip H. Cheatwood  
Fred S. Clarke  
Thomas Henry Clarke IV  
Michael S. Colo  
Howard C. Colvard Jr.  
Jack B. Crawley Jr.  
John L. Crill  
John Michael Crowell  
William B. Crumpler  
Jasper L. Cummings Jr.

Samuel B. Currin III  
Robert Michael Daniel  
Benjamin F. Davis Jr.  
Gilbert T. Davis Jr.  
Lindsay R. Davis Jr.  
Mary C. Dean  
Winston J. Dean  
Christine Witcover Dean  
Renny W. Deese  
Michael J. Devaney  
Francis J. Dipasquantonio  
Richard L. Doughton  
James U. Downs  
Edward Hunt Duffield  
Christine Durham  
Kenneth R. Ellis  
Joseph E. Elrod III  
George K. Evans Jr.  
John Patrick Exum  
Robert A. Farris Jr.  
Michael R. Ford  
James C. Fuller Jr.  
John G. Gaw Jr.  
James E. Gill Jr.  
Kenneth A. Glusman  
J. Samuel Gorham III  
Douglas W. Greene  
Howard R. Greeson Jr.  
Donald W. Grimes  
William H. Guy  
Charles B. Hahn  
William G. Hancock Jr.  
Gregg A. Hansen  
David Alden Harlow  
Donald Wilson Harper  
Robert E. Harrington

Stephen E. Hart  
Ralf Frederick Haskell  
John E. Hauge  
Harvey Clay Hemric Jr.  
William M. Henabray Jr.  
Thomas D. Higgins III  
Kenneth B. Hipp  
William P. Hobson  
John David James  
Fred Fincher Jarrell  
Cecil R. Jenkins Jr.  
Joseph R. John Sr.  
Robert W. Johnson  
Douglas A. Johnston  
Norwood Shelton Jones  
Graydon Miller Jordan  
Dan G. King  
Patricia E. King  
Louis Allan Kleiman  
Russell Kresslov  
Carter T. Lambeth  
Carl Laumann Jr.  
Donald G. Lawrence  
Willis R. Lawrence  
Jerry W. Leonard  
Thomas A. Levin  
Paul H. Livingston Jr.  
William R. Loftis Jr.  
Frank A. Longest Jr.  
Wilson M. MacEwen  
Gene W. Matthews  
John Matuszeski  
Grover Clinton McCain Jr.  
Charles K. McCotter Jr.  
William H. McElwee III  
Paul S. Messick Jr.

Henry Todd Miller  
James F. Mock  
Travis W. Moon  
George W. Moore  
Thomas D. Mooring Jr.  
Charles R. Morrison  
Ocie F. Murray Jr.  
Jeffrey T. Myles  
Robert W. Myrick  
Walker F. Nolan Jr.  
Kenneth B. Oettinger  
Chapin Pierre Oldham  
G. Edgar (Ed) Parker  
Walter B. Patterson II  
Louis W. Payne Jr.  
Jerome L. Peace  
Stafford R. Peebles Jr.  
Walter W. Pitt Jr.  
Raymond W. Postlethwait Jr.  
Haywood Forney Rankin

Richard R. Reamer  
Ann Reed Dunn  
Edward A. Reilly  
William A. Reppy Jr.  
Richard T. Rodgers Sr.  
Richmond W. Rucker  
Ronald H. Ruis II  
Joseph Rution  
Alexander P. Sands III  
James Schooler  
Christopher Seawell  
J. Larry Senter  
Norman W. Shearin Jr.  
John M. Silverstein  
Claude E. Simons Jr.  
Gary S. Smithwick  
John Joyner Snow Jr.  
Edwin M. Speas Jr.  
Barney Stewart III  
John C. Stout Jr.

Odes L. Stroupe  
James Edward Switzer Jr.  
Joseph O. Taylor Jr.  
George M. Teague  
Patrick V. Terranova  
Allen R. Tew  
William M. Trott  
H. R. Turnbull III  
Bruce W. Vanderbloemen  
Donald M. VonCannon  
Frank P. Ward Jr.  
Melvin L. Watt  
William W. Webb  
James M. Weeks  
Reich L. Welborn  
Clarence D. Williams Jr.  
O. Richard Wright Jr.  
Donna E. Wynne

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## **Speaker and Fifty-Year Lawyer Richard L. Doughton**

I grew up on a cattle and dairy farm in Alleghany County, North Carolina. I graduated from Piney Creek High School in Alleghany County in 1965. In 1968 I graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a bachelor's degree in political science. I attended and graduated from Wake Forest University School of Law with a Juris Doctor degree in 1971.

In 1971 I began my practice of law with the law firm of Pope and Brawley in Iredell

County, where I became a partner and practiced until going home to Sparta. In 1978 I founded a general practice of law in Sparta where I practiced until becoming a special superior court judge in 1997. I served in that capacity until 2018 when I retired. Since then, I have served as an emergency retired/recalled superior court judge.

I am a life-long member of the Sparta United Methodist Church, where I presently serve as an officer.

I am one of less than ten superior court judges who have held court in all 100 North Carolina counties.

I spent 16 years on the North Carolina Pattern Jury Committee, serving as chair of the criminal subcommittee the last several years of my service on that committee.

My wife and I have a beef cattle farming operation, which we have operated for many years. I have also served on several boards including being chair of the board of a local bank before I became a judge.

I have been a member of the NC State Bar and North Carolina Bar Association during my entire career. I have served on numerous committees of the State Bar and NCBA. I served several years on the DHC for the State

Bar and one year as vice-president at the NCBA. I currently serve as chair elect of the senior lawyer division of the NCBA.

Some of my proudest moments as a judge were when I received the Citizen Lawyer Award from the NCBA, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Western North Carolina Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates, the Friend of the Court Award from the North Carolina Supreme Court, and the Governor's Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

I could not have chosen a better profession in life than being a member of the North Carolina State Bar. I believe we here in North Carolina have a state bar as strong as any in any state in the union. My prediction is we will remain so.

### **W. Thad Adams III**

I have practiced patent and trademark law for 50 years, and finally retired this year. Having worked as a lawyer with scientific and engineering matters almost every day of that 50 years, I take this opportunity to comment on the vast changes in technology in the law office that have occurred since 1971, when I was hired by a patent law firm in Charlotte and began my 50 year career.

In 1971 there were no law office computers. At my firm, documents were typed on an IBM Executive typewriter. We did have an early word processor that used magnetic cards. It stayed broken. Dictation was to a secretary sitting across from me taking shorthand. The copier was a Xerox the size of a refrigerator that was usually inoperable and cost a fortune. We had a very early fax machine—you placed a special sheet of paper

into the machine, dialed a telephone number, and placed the receiver into an acoustic cup. A needle scratched crude letters onto the paper at two to four pages per minute. Email and mobile phones were unimagined, as were websites. Mine is [adamspat.com](http://adamspat.com). Feel free to take a look.

When I started my own firm in 1978, my equipment was an IBM Selectric ("ball") typewriter and a very slow copier that printed on smelly paper. Shorthand was still used. In 1982 I purchased my first PC—\$7,000 for which I got a tiny amber monitor, 10 mgs of ram memory with a slot into which a floppy disk was inserted, and a dot matrix printer. Turned out that typing was the most valuable course I took in high school! A Hayes 1200 baud modem allowed a crude, slow form of online communication. By then I also had a Telex machine—a noisy keyboard and punch tape monster that I used to communicate with clients and associates in Europe and Japan. It weighed over 100 lbs. My first fax machine spit out long rolls of heat sensitive paper that we then had to slice to document length.

Nevertheless, even with this early technology, patent and trademark searching in a primitive fashion could be done online. Correspondence no longer relied on "snail mail." Exponential increases in data speed and equally exponential reductions in the cost of everything associated with digital data transfer changed my law practice forever. I have had over 20 desktop computers and almost that many laptops. My first portable, a Compac Portable, weighed 40 lbs and resembled a sewing machine. Laptops quickly took over and are now so good that for the

last five years my laptop has also served as my desktop machine. Typewriters, shorthand pads, fax machines, and external modems are now as much a curiosity as the Post Versalog slide rule I used at NC State and the E6B I used as a pilot.

I cannot close without first paying a sincere tribute to several wonderfully talented ladies without whom all this technology would have been useless—Anne Juergensen, Kathy Nicholson, Pat Silver, Kris Pierce, Melinda Mileham, Cookie Farley, Deidre Rogers, Cecilia Sidebottom, and Jessica Kelly. All remain dear friends. Likewise for my good friend and patent draftsman since 1978, Mike Maloney. My heartfelt thanks you each of you!

I have been known to write doggerel poetry from time to time, so I close:

My old Telex is a boat anchor,

My first fax machine a door stop.

The Blackberry belongs to the 2 year old,  
The VCR is the base for a clock.

In the meantime I'm on my 5th iPhone  
And my TV is as big as a house.

The computer in my car thinks I'm stupid,  
But at least I've got the same spouse.

### **Rudolph A. Ashton III**

After graduating from Wake Forest (BS in math, 1968) and the University of Virginia Law School (JD, 1971), I had an army ROTC commitment. My reporting date was delayed, allowing me to take the North Carolina bar exam that summer. Due to winding down in Vietnam, my active duty was completed in 1972.

Prior to getting a real legal job, I had a number of part-time jobs including: night

watchman at a hotel in Virginia Beach, Monday night bartender at a sports bar during the beginning of Monday Night Football, volunteer at San Francisco Legal Aid Society, and police officer in Ocean City, Maryland.

I began my real life in the law as a law clerk to Federal Judge John Larkins in Trenton, North Carolina. After that, I was a prosecutor in Raleigh. I was with the Wake County District Attorney's Office and the Attorney General's Office (approximately three years each).

On February 1, 1981, I moved to New Bern to begin private practice, and I have been here ever since. It was a great place to raise my son and daughter, both of whom are doing very well. I have four wonderful grandchildren. New Bern has become a retirement community, so Joanne and I don't have to go anywhere if I ever retire.

My practice has generally been criminal and civil litigation and appeals in both state and federal courts. I am still on the appointment list with the North Carolina appellate defender, the federal public defender, and the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. I have an oral argument scheduled on May 5 in Richmond on appeal number 315, and I still enjoy the challenge.

I have been fortunate to have had a number of mentors during my many years of practice, and I have attempted to return the favor by mentoring law clerks and younger lawyers that have worked with me through the years. I take pride in seeing them do well, and at least five have become judges.

Collegiality and mentorship have been hallmarks of our profession for many years. Unfortunately, with the rise in computer use

and less personal contact, I see some of these hallmarks slipping away. I am disappointed when I see a judicial nominee being questioned and criticized because she was a public defender representing clients who could not afford counsel. However, I am encouraged when I see many younger lawyers in the courtroom, around town, at bar meetings and CLE, and active in the community. I know our profession is in good hands.

### **J. Michael Boo**

Following graduation from Davidson in spring 1967, I enrolled in law school at UNC that fall at the height of the Vietnam War. During that first law school year, I received a notice to report for a draft physical. With a little diligence and a lot of luck, I jumped the line and got into a Durham Army Reserve unit before I was drafted, reporting for active-duty training in late fall/early winter 1968/1969. The relevance of that vignette is that I started law school with the class of 1970, but graduated with the class of 1971.

After passing the bar exam, I went to work as a management trainee for a family-owned manufacturer of knitted fabrics with plants in Pilot Mountain and Gastonia. Two years into that gig, I got the itch to use the law license hanging on the wall at home, and I became the third lawyer in a general practice law firm in Charlotte. For three years I did a little bit of everything, longing for the day that I could do something (anything) for the second time. That was a tough time professionally, but in the long run, that wide-ranging experience provided an invaluable base for the years of practice that followed.

One of my assignments during that period

was to file bankruptcy for a small upholstery manufacturer to thwart (or at least delay) remedy enforcement actions by its factor. I did not take a bankruptcy or creditors rights course in law school, so I found and read Judge Rufus Reynolds's paperback pamphlet on the *Basics of Bankruptcy*. Astoundingly naive about how much I did not know, I jumped into turbulent water without a life jacket. Although the factory was local, its counsel was a crusty, 60-something lawyer from midtown Manhattan, who chewed me up and spit me out. An unpleasant experience to be sure, but I learned a lot and found the bankruptcy process fascinating. By the time I retired more than 40 years later, I was a certified specialist in business bankruptcy law by the NC Board of Legal Specialization and the American Board of Certification, and a fellow in the American College of Bankruptcy.

During those 40-plus years, I practiced law in Charlotte with eight law firms, all but three of them with name changes resulting from the "urge to merge." At one point I was in a two-lawyer firm. I was also in a firm with 2,200 lawyers in 43 offices on five continents. That last fact is not a boast; it is a confession. I came to understand that bigger is not always better, at least not from a work-life balance and happiness perspective. Following a two year wind down and transition of my remaining practice to eager younger lawyers, I retired "cold turkey" in 2015.

Among the most challenging, rewarding, and enjoyable experiences during my 42 years of practicing law was service for nine years on the State Bar Council, four years on the Disciplinary Hearing Commission, and four years as initial chair of the Board of

Paralegal Certification after leading for two years the State Bar appointed group of lawyers and paralegals who developed the Paralegal Certification Plan. The challenging part involved consideration of knotty legal and ethical issues with no clear answers, participation in heated discussions with passionate advocates, all of whom believed their position was right and just, and heartbreaking decisions impacting the legal careers of lawyers who made terrible choices. The rewarding and enjoyable part was meeting and getting to know lawyers and paralegals from every corner of the state, and appreciating how much diversity there is in the practice of law in North Carolina, substantively and geographically.

Along the way, I married (and divorced), became the father of two daughters, and more recently the grandfather of three boys and a girl. In 1993 I married a lawyer, Rebecca Henderson. We have been married for 28 years and currently live on Lake Norman in Cornelius.

## William V. Bost

I am from Rowan County, where I was born and now live. I hold a BA degree in English and american literature from UNC, an MA degree in English and american literature from UNC, and a JD degree in law from UNC.

While at UNC I was employed by the Dean of Men's Office as resident advisor and head resident advisor for two years the summer after graduation in June 1963.

I began graduate school at UNC for a master's degree in English literature. In 1963 I began law school. and completed my MA the



following summer. My thesis was on how people act in a pandemic in Daniel Defoe's "Journal of The Plague Year." I married in 1966 and have been married for 55 years.

After attending two years of law school, and going year-round to school for five years, I was offered a job at Clemson University as an instructor in the English Department. I stayed at Clemson and finished the law degree at UNC in the summers, and while at Clemson I passed the SC bar exam in 1971. I then was hired as assistant to the vice president and did legal work under the school counsel. I also taught a course in film history and criticism, a course I proposed and was added to the Clemson catalogue as Humanities 201. This course was included in

the 1971-73 American Film Institute's guide to college courses in film.

In 1973 I was offered a position as vice president of student affairs and assistant professor of business law at Catawba College in my hometown of Salisbury, NC. I taught and worked there for five years.

I now practice law in Salisbury with two of my children, Victoria Kate Bost and William David Bost. We practice only in the areas of bankruptcy and family law.

I have kept my interest in education. I was elected and served a four-year sentence on the Rowan-Salisbury School Board from 1996-2000, but I got off with probation and a couple of dirty looks. Prior to my school board years, I led a successful school bond referen-

dum in 1993 to air condition our county schools and build two new schools—Hanford Dole Elementary and S.E. Middle School.

In the 1990s I volunteer taught through the Junior Achievement program (Chamber of Commerce) for five years, and I served on the Board of Junior Achievement for the same period.

As for civic affairs, I served as president of Salisbury Lions Club and the Brown-Fisher Family Association.

At present, I serve as president of Every Mans Bible Class at The First Presbyterian Church and also teach Sunday School there.

People ask me when I plan to retire since I am over 79 years old. I tell them I'll retire when I stop eating.

## **F. Stuart Clarke**

A fortuitous set of circumstances caused me to find myself in Richmond, Virginia, a few weeks after being licensed to practice law to argue a case at the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. I was there as an assistant United States attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina. What led me to this point was the beginning of my legal career. I left the US Army in May 1969 in time to attend the first summer school session at UNC School of Law. I received my Juris Doctor degree in January 1971. So, there I was with a law degree and no license for the practice of law. The bar, of course, was only given one time a year, in July.

Fortunately, I received a call from an old friend from undergraduate school who was leaving his job as law clerk to a federal judge and wanted to know if I would be willing to go down to New Bern to interview for the

position. I interviewed with US District Court Judge John D. Larkins Jr., who offered me a position as law clerk.

I spent approximately ten months as his law clerk before accepting an appointment as assistant United States attorney. In that position, I had the job of defending the United States government from the president on down to the commanding officer at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, in a case filed by Jane Fonda, Donald Southerland, and Tom Hayden. These folks had written an anti-war play and applied to the general at Ft. Bragg to perform their play on Ft. Bragg. Of course, they were refused. They filed a lawsuit in the Eastern District of North Carolina, attempting to have the court overrule the government's position. I had only been a licensed attorney for a short period of time when I received this case to defend. Had I had the wisdom of my years now, I would have flown to California to take Jane Fonda's deposition but, being new to the game, I filed a motion for summary judgment which Judge Franklin T. Dupree allowed. I also defended another anti-war lawsuit brought by former classmates of mine from UNC School of Law. That too was dismissed.

I left the US Attorney's Office at the end of 1972 and entered practice in Fayetteville with former US Attorney Warren Coolidge and his partner, William Anniston. I was appointed as a part-time United States magistrate in February 1973. I received a phone call one day from Judge Dupree asking if I would preside over the jury view in the Jeffrey MacDonald murder trial. The jury was bussed to Fayetteville with US marshalls where we convened in the federal building, and they were given instructions as to how we

were going to perform this jury view. Then we were bussed out to Ft. Bragg to the scene of the crime. The apartment was sealed, and we unsealed it and allowed the jury to walk through without speaking to view the premises. While we were standing with the lawyers under trees in the front yard, the lawyer for Jeffrey MacDonald began making motions to me. I told him that this was neither the time nor place and if he had anything to present he should do it before Judge Dupree on Monday morning. However, he insisted so I pulled Wade Smith aside and said, "Wade, tell your colleague that if he does not cease and desist from making motions out here under the trees that I am going to have the US marshalls take him and put him on the bus and keep him there until we finish the jury view."

I served in this position for a little over ten years holding court early on at Ft. Bragg and later in the federal building in Fayetteville. It was a unique appointment because I could practice law at the same time I preformed my duties as part-time United States magistrate. There are many more such stories, but I won't bore you with them. After that auspicious beginning, I settled down to a normal civil practice for the next 48 years or so. I go to my office most every day.

## **Michael Crowell**

Lessons from 50 years of practicing law:

1. No one is really interested in the lessons you think you've learned. They are just being polite. Everyone has to find out for themselves.
2. Book smarts and the law are only a small part of the equation. Empathy, charm, calm, and common sense all are more important.
3. It doesn't matter where you went to

school or what grades you made.

4. The cases you'll remember weren't about money. They had a surprising result, an underdog story, some new law.

5. You had better have a sense of humor.

6. Everyone talks too much in court. Every brief is too long.

7. Ability has nothing to do with gender, race, sexual identity—any of those things.

8. Electing judges is awful.

9. Try different kinds of cases, it'll make you a better lawyer.

10. Practice only with people you like, and be a partner only with people whose names you know.

11. It's okay to make money. But my gosh, the hourly rates some lawyers are charging. As a rule of thumb, never charge a rate greater than you could pay.

12. Advocacy is mostly about the ability to tell stories.

13. Learn to talk and write like a normal person.

14. People will read short, bulleted lists no matter how inane.

15. When you don't know the answer, just say so.

16. Everything used to be better.

17. Consider yourself a success if you never have to ask for sanctions against another lawyer.

18. If you pretend to know what you are doing, most people won't be able to tell the difference.

19. You are underappreciated. But so is everyone else.

## Jasper L. Cummings Jr.

I was sworn in in Tarboro by Judge Perry

Martin, witnessed by the then luminaries of the Edgecombe County and Rocky Mount bars—Brian Scott, Robert Wiley, M. Alexander Biggs, and Jim Trotter—who were in court for a big case. Practicing law was a seemingly simple undertaking of writing wills, drafting complaints, and constructing contracts, the bread and butter of practice. Unfortunately, every one of those practice activities required figuring out what you did not know about the law.

The research tools were simple: CJS, AM JUR, the General Statutes—what more could you want? The old lawyers would say, “You never know what you will find in the general statutes.” Turned out, a lot more was needed. Trips would be made to the county courthouse to look at Reporters we did not have; maybe even to the Supreme Court Library in Raleigh. The BNA daily mailed publication brought news of all sorts of exotic law changes, not yet available by the internet.

Of course, some activities did not require legal information, just care, such as running your finger down the list of deed transfers in preparation of a title opinion. The newly minted NC Rules of Civil Procedure helped eliminate a lot of potential for footfaults in stating your cause of action.

There was great camaraderie in the local bar; you knew all the lawyers. Occasionally you would go to one of the few (maybe three per year) CLE programs sponsored by the NC Bar Association; there were no other “providers.”

The idea of having “sections” in the bar association for different practice areas arose. I distinctly recall standing in the bar headquarters on Wade Avenue and hearing the then

Executive Director Bill Storey state, “there will never be sections in the NC Bar Association.”

Trends in the “business” of the law seemed to come to North Carolina about 30 years after they occurred in the big cities. In the 1970s we thought clients were lucky to have good lawyers as their lawyers. It was not long, by the early 1980s, that things changed and lawyers started to have to “sell” their services, a common fact of life today.

The law is a fascinating subject. But practicing law is a different matter. Being able to produce a good result for clients in a high percentage of engagements is admirable and hard to attain. I have known a few—very few—lawyers who could do it, and it required a rare combination of intelligence and being willing to sit in the office on Saturday afternoon and mull the problem. At least back in those days the Saturday morning and afternoon lawyers were the ones who counted. Now many lawyers are within reach 24/7, but not necessarily with the same results.

Mentoring really happened then. I sat with senior lawyers and worked on contracts and legal issues side-by-side for years. Today, the new graduate is expected to bill 2,000 hours and actually do productive work. But then, \$30/hour for my work in the early 1970s probably was not a bargain.

## Samuel B. Currin III

I was born in Granville County in July 1946. I enjoyed growing up in the small town of Oxford in the 50s and 60s. I attended the public schools in Oxford, graduating in 1964 from J. F. Webb High School. I entered Wake Forest College in the fall of 1964 and graduat-



ed in the turbulent year of 1968. That fall I began Wake Forest School of Law and graduated in 1971.

I began practicing law in Raleigh for the firm of Holowell and Ragsdale doing their real estate work. An opening at Watkins and Edmundson in Oxford, where I had previously interned, became available. It was a general small town practice including real estate, civil litigation, and criminal practice. I was named special counsel at John Umstead Hospital in 1974. After severing there for three years, I opened a private law practice in Oxford.

I became an assistant district attorney in 1979, was later appointed as district attorney in 2001, and retired in December 2014,

receiving the Order of the Long Leaf Pine. Since then, I have been practicing with the law firm of Cross and Currin in Oxford.

The highlights of my career have been in victories for the people of North Carolina in the prosecution of defendants for murders, robberies, and sexual offenses against children.

I have also been involved in civic and religious affairs, serving on the City Council for 16 years, and serving as president of both the Jaycees and Kiwanis Club. I have been on the vestry of Saint Stephens Episcopal Church six times, having been senior warden twice.

## **Robert Michael Daniel**

I graduated from the UNC School of Law

in June 1971 at the age of 23. The bar exam was a three day, 24 question essay exam given on August 3, 4, and 5 in Raleigh. I received notice of passing the exam on August 14. Two weeks later I reported to Quantico, VA, for a three-year tour as a Marine Corps officer. After 26 weeks at the basic school, I was ordered to Newport, RI, for Naval Justice School. From there I went to MCAS El Toro where I served 13 months as trial and defense counsel. I then went on an unaccompanied tour to Okinawa. In May 1974 I returned to the USA and was released from active duty, then joined B.C. Smith in Pittsboro, NC, and was a typical small town lawyer, doing whatever walked into the office. It was a great experience. I accepted an opportunity to join Mellon Bank in Pittsburgh, PA, as a trust officer, where I worked for three years in the Estate Administration Unit. Mellon was an excellent training ground. In 1978 I joined Buchanan Ingersoll as an associate in the firm's Trust and Estate Group. I became an equity partner in 1982. In 2002 I joined Cohen & Grigsby as a partner and was with the firm until my retirement in 2015. I then moved back to North Carolina where my wife and I settled down in Clayton.

My practice was always limited to estate and trust planning and administration, fiduciary income tax matters, and family dispute resolution. I was very active in the PA Bar Association and lectured extensively for the Pennsylvania Bar Institute. I presented CLE programs in every one of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania. I was chair of the Real Property, Trust and Estate Section of the PBA for two years. I became a fellow in the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel. My pro-

file was listed in Best Lawyers in America for 29 years. In 2013, Best Lawyers designated me as the top estate planning attorney in Allegheny County, and in 2014 the top fiduciary litigation attorney in Allegheny County.

I resigned from the PA Bar upon my retirement. Now I volunteer at a local food pantry and assist a Boy Scout troop.

### **Lindsay R. Davis Jr.**

In late summer 1971, I was sworn in at the old Guilford County Courthouse, along with several others. Several superior court judges presided. I don't recall all the judges, but I do remember that my certificate was signed by The Honorable (and late) Thomas W. Seay. I didn't know Judge Seay then, but thereafter, an appearance before him was bound to produce certain physical responses with which I'm sure others are familiar, but that's another story.

I joined the Greensboro firm of Jordan, Wright, Nichols, Caffrey & Hill, and after completing an active duty army commitment, I remained with that firm for almost 30 years. The name changed occasionally with the passing or retirement of partners, but it remained the same firm. My practice included both trial and corporate matters. Before my first jury trial, one of my colleagues reminded me (as if he needed to) that if you don't win the first one, you can't win them all. I lost, but over the years there were wins and losses, and after I learned that trying a case is not a personal contest with opposing counsel, I enjoyed it more and made many good and lasting friends with attorneys on the other side. One of the highlights of my practice was prosecuting to a

successful settlement a class action on behalf of elderly clients who had lost much of their nest eggs in an investment. Another was as part of a team of lawyers who won in the US Supreme Court what became a landmark and routinely cited case on arbitration.

In 2001, Governor Hunt appointed me to succeed The Honorable Thomas W. Ross as a Guilford County Resident Superior Court Judge. I eventually became the senior resident and remained in office until reaching the mandatory retirement age of 72. The experience vastly expanded my exposure to areas of the law and the attorneys who practice in them, especially criminal prosecution and defense, and fostered an immense appreciation for those attorneys and their skill, knowledge, and dedication to the pursuit of justice. For some 15 years I served as a member of the Pattern Jury Instructions Committee, an experience as challenging and rewarding as any in my career. Since retirement, I have continued to serve from time to time as a retired/recalled superior court judge, with commissions to preside in regularly scheduled court sessions and as a 2.1 judge, and as a discovery referee in a couple of business court cases.

I can't say that 1971 feels like yesterday, and there have been times (like when a jury asked to award the opposing party more than it asked for) when I wondered about my career choice. Truly, though, I have had a great ride and have no regrets about that choice. My 50 years at the bar gave me opportunities that many do not have. I believe that only a small percentage of lawyers become truly wealthy from their practices, but all have the ability, with hard work and perseverance,

to earn a comfortable living. I'm in that group. My wife Ann supported me all the way, especially when the stresses were intense. Together we made a good home, contributed to our community, had children and raised them, and raised them well, I believe. As professionals, we lawyers may not be trusted with folks' health and lives of people, as doctors may be, or with their souls, as ministers of faith may be, but we are entrusted with some of the most important and stressful matters in our clients' lives. It is a high calling to advise, assist, and guide them, and we should be proud to answer it.

### **James U. Downs**

I was born in Shreveport, Louisiana, on September 26, 1941, as an only child of J. Earl and Helen Downs. I lived in Shreveport—except for time spent in college, law school, and the United States Army—until the early part of 1971, at which time I moved my family to Franklin, North Carolina, and practiced law with the firm of Jones, Jones & Key once I passed the North Carolina Bar.

I attended the Virginia Military Institute for college and graduated in 1963 with a BA degree in history. I thereafter attended Loyola University School of Law in New Orleans, Louisiana, and graduated from there with a LLB in 1966. Shortly after being sworn in the Louisiana Bar in August 1966, I began serving a two-year enlistment in the United States Army because of being commissioned from VMI, which commission was deferred until I completed law school. I entered active duty at a rank of 1st lieutenant and separated from service two years thereafter at the rank of cap-

tain. Although being an officer in the armor branch of the United States Army, I did judge advocate work exclusively for 22 months of my active duty and participated in hundreds of trials as trial counsel and defense counsel at the special court martial level. I also participated in several general court martial trials upon being requested to do so by the defendants. After leaving the United States Army, I returned to my home in Shreveport and began practicing law as a solo practitioner in September 1968, and remained doing that until I moved to North Carolina.

Between the times that I was sworn in as an attorney to practice law in North Carolina in September 1971 until the time that I took the oath to become a superior court judge in June 1983, I worked for the firm of Jones, Jones & Key for five years and thereafter engaged as a sole practitioner, except for two periods being associated with James Y. Cabe and John Henning. My practice involved all that a country lawyer would do, such as transactional work, title work, representing estates, and participating in many trials in the district courts and superior courts of North Carolina, as well as United States District Court in the Western District of North Carolina and one case in the Eastern District of North Carolina. I appeared before the North Carolina Court of Appeals on nine occasions and before the 4th Circuit Federal Court of Appeals on two occasions being the primary attorney for the sides I represented. Before going on the bench, I was fortunate enough to earn an AV classification in the Martindale Hubbell lawyer rating.

I was sworn in as a superior court judge for the 13th Judicial District of North Carolina

on or about June 29, 1983, and remained in that job until my mandatory retirement on September 30, 2013. I served primarily in the Fourth Division, which consisted of the counties of Mecklenburg north to Watauga and west to Cherokee County, and all counties in between.

After retiring from the bench, I re-engaged in the practice of law and associated with the Hickory law firm of Sigmon, Clark, Mackie, Hanvey & Ferrell primarily practicing in Franklin, North Carolina, which is designated as the Western Office of that firm. During the time that I have been a licensed attorney in North Carolina, Louisiana, and the United States Army, I thoroughly liked every aspect of my professional life, whether it was as an attorney or a judge. I have been extremely lucky to do something during my entire adult life that I fully enjoy and have been blessed to have attained the age so that I can receive recognition for being a member of the North Carolina Bar for 50 years. I am well acquainted with several of the members of this class and feel honored to be counted amongst them.

### **George K. Evans Jr.**

After college at Sewanee, I attended law school at the University of Virginia, graduating in 1971. Following the bar exam, I went on active duty in the Navy JAG Corps, with training at Newport, RI, and then assignment to the Memphis Naval Air Station. I finished my commitment in 1975 and returned to my hometown of Charlotte, where I practiced with the Cansler Lockhart law firm until 2000. The firm handled a wide range of civil matters, and my practice

included life and disability insurance defense, railroad defense, real estate, wills and probate, employment claim defense, tax law, and more. In 2000 I became of counsel at Womble Carlyle in Winston-Salem, focusing mainly on life and disability insurance defense. In 2015 I retired from active practice, and my wife and I moved east to historic New Bern.

In 1971, North Carolina was essentially a small town and rural state, with about five million people. What a change! We now have almost ten million people, nationally important metropolitan areas, and a diverse and sophisticated economy. In 1971, the two preceding generations of lawyers were almost all white men—today's lawyers are diverse in background, gender, and ethnicity.

The everyday life of lawyers has experienced equally dramatic changes. Once a megafirm might have 20 lawyers. First came multi-city offices, then national megafirms with hundreds of (or more) attorneys. A growing body of law, especially federal regulation, made work far more complex, so that what was once routine became much more difficult. The result—most lawyers, like me, became specialists to some degree. Hourly rates, internal expenses, billable hour expectations, and other financial concerns sometimes led to new issues both within firms and sometimes with clients. And damage claims ballooned. The growing availability of punitive and treble damages have sometimes led to high stakes demands and recoveries that would have been unimaginable in 1971.

The remarkable growth of electronic devices has dramatically increased efficiency, but also pushed the pace of daily work. Once

we tracked the cost of long distance calls, and marveled when handheld cassettes replaced dictaphone tapes. Time management experts then advised blocking out several uninterrupted hours per day to do careful, thoughtful work and avoid multitasking—it leads to careless mistakes. Now lawyers are expected to be available constantly. Rapid email responses are the norm—no more carefully considered letters sent the next day.

Likewise, electronic recordkeeping has resulted in remarkable changes in discovery, especially in corporate litigation. Case files have grown from file folders to bankers' boxes, to rooms of documents. The search for the truth now often uncovers information that was at one time unknown and unknowable, but it has become an expensive process.

Yet the personal side of law practice remains largely intact. The practice of law has enabled me to get to know, and learn from, some great people—colleagues, mentors, judges, clients, witnesses, and even adversaries. Confronting and resolving problems with others, often under difficult circumstances, has been and remains an exhilarating and gratifying experience presented by our profession.

### **Robert A. Farris Jr.**

You might say my legal career began on December 4, 1946, when Mom and Dad (who had returned to law school after serving in the South Pacific) brought me home to Victory Village from Watts Hospital in Durham, there being no hospital in Chapel Hill at the time. I returned to UNC in 1964, graduating in 1971, and, as my father did before me, returned to my hometown of

Wilson with a wife and first born, being sworn in by the Honorable Albert Cowper with two of my classmates in August.

After several trials in district court, in October I tried my first felony jury trial in the Wilson County Superior Court, followed shortly thereafter with two jury trials in November of traffic offenses. For about the next 48 years, I was actively engaged in civil and criminal trials in and around Wilson, often with family partners, including my father, my two brothers, my daughter, one of my sons, half a dozen cousins, and many new friends. Along the way I have been involved in about 200 murder cases, thousands of felonies and serious personal injury cases, tens of thousands of misdemeanors and less serious personal injury matters, as well as engaged in an active office practice in Eastern North Carolina. In addition to the trial and appellate courts of North Carolina, it has been my pleasure to appear in bankruptcy and other federal courts including the Eastern District of North Carolina, Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court of the United States.

I have enjoyed serving as county bar president; judicial district bar president; original member of the North Carolina Education Lottery Commission, serving as its third chair; as well as numerous positions with my church and community. As the third chair of the Wilson Opportunities Industrialization Center Board, I served on the National Executive Board of OIC and as regional director for the southeast region. Along the way I have come into contact with many of the finest individuals the state of North Carolina has to offer, its lawyers.

### **Gregg A. Hansen**

I was born in Ketchikan, Alaska, and lived in Oregon, California, Georgia, New York, and spent my teenage years in Arlington, Virginia. I graduated with a BA from the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

I served 36 years in Greensboro as in-house counsel for Lincoln Financial Group (and its predecessors, Pilot Life and Jefferson-Pilot Life Insurance Companies). At the time of my retirement, I was serving as vice president and associate general counsel.

I also had a second career in the United States Army. After graduation from the University of North Carolina School of Law in 1971 and passing the bar exam, I entered active duty and served at: Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis, Indiana; Fort Eustis, Newport News, Virginia; the Republic of Vietnam; Fort Bragg, Fayetteville, North Carolina; and Fort Carson, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Upon my release from active duty, I joined the army reserves. As a reservist, I was called to active duty in 1991 during Operation Desert Storm. I retired as a colonel with 29 years of service. ("I" is used so many times in this essay—read, "aye"—one would think I had been in the navy rather than the army!)

Last, but most important: While in my third year of law school, I met and fell in love with Mildred Williams, who was completing her master's in education. We married in 1973 after my tour in Vietnam. We celebrated our 48th wedding anniversary this past August. We are blessed with two wonderful and loving children—a daughter, and a son—and four grandchildren.

## David A. Harlow

As we have grown older and approached retirement, I'm sure many of us have reflected on our careers. When I did so, I asked myself "How have I contributed most to society?" The answer lay not with the financially successful practice of many years in the field of intellectual property law as a partner in large law firms like Moore & Van Allen and Nelson Mullins, but rather work as a young government lawyer for the Army Corps of Engineers. In short, it came from playing a critical part in the building of the Jordan Lake Dam & Reservoir and the Falls Lake Dam & Reservoir projects. Without my work, and that of my military counterpart, a young army captain and North Carolina lawyer named Charlie Mill, those reservoirs which today serve as major water resources for the Research Triangle might never have been built. They are my legacy to society.

Initially, the corps had lost a number of the lawsuits brought under the then new National Environmental Policy Act. The general counsel of the corps was inclined to give up on all of them. I had somehow come up with the idea of having the municipalities that wanted the dams and reservoir to be built, to join our lawsuits as intervenor defendants. Charlie and I went to Washington and argued to the general counsel to let us proceed in defense of the projects. Perhaps aided by Charlie's appearance in an officer's uniform, we prevailed with the general counsel, and eventually in the lawsuits. In the suits I was greatly aided in the advocacy by the quality of the counsel that represented the municipalities—how about the teaching I got from working with federal judges to be Bill Osteen

Sr. and Jim Fox, and top trial lawyers Rudolph Singleton and Howard Manning Sr.? I learned a lot, and I'm very proud to have contributed in this way to the growth of the Research Triangle.

## Stephen E. Hart

My career was primarily with various federal agencies in Washington, DC. After four years of coast guard legal duty in New York City immediately after law school, I remained in the USCG reserve for another 24 years, retiring as a captain (0-6) in 1998. While in NYC, I attended NYU School of Law, where I earned an LL.M. with emphasis in litigation in 1976. After my four years of active duty, I moved to Alexandria, VA, and became an enforcement attorney with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), where I worked for four years.

I spent the next 11 years as a trial attorney in the Civil Division, US Department of Justice (DOJ), primarily defending against constitutional and statutory challenges to US laws, government regulations, and executive actions. My tenure commenced with defending cases involving the PATCO strike, and when I departed I was defending the 1990 Census. At DOJ I handled, among various matters, the first railroad drug testing case, a lawsuit brought by the Bikini Islanders to regain their Atoll (used as a nuclear test site after WWII), and brought suit on behalf of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, successfully abolishing the manufacture of unsafe three-wheeled ATVs. I also served as an assistant branch director, overseeing trial attorneys in such matters as Department of Energy price controls, Department of Interior

oil royalties, and USDA marketing orders. This work whetted my appetite for litigation involving issues of national policy. Therefore, in 1991 I joined the recently-created Office of Thrift Supervision, which dealt with the "thrift crisis." I soon became an enforcement assistant general counsel, responsible for directing attorneys in administrative enforcement actions against thrifts.

I initially retired in 2002 and spent a year in private practice with a small DC housing law firm, at which point government service again beckoned, as I was recruited by the Office of Federal Housing Oversight (OFHEO) to lead a team of contract attorneys in an administrative enforcement action against Freddie Mac and various of its officers for earnings manipulation. This complex administrative action took 12 attorneys almost three years to complete. OFHEO was soon thereafter folded into the newly-created Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), which regulates Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac (Enterprises), and the FHLBs. The enterprises soon thereafter were placed into FHFA conservatorship. At that point, litigation against all three entities exploded, and I found myself personally handling or overseeing private attorneys in many of those lawsuits. In January 2009 I was chosen as FHFA's deputy general counsel for litigation and became responsible for managing most FHFA litigation. In 2010, the largest and most complex matter arose, which resulted in 18 civil actions against financial institutions for securities misrepresentations to the enterprises, helping to lead to the 2008 financial crisis. FHFA hired three large private law firms to handle these suits, all of which I oversaw.

Eventually settling, the cases collected more than \$30 billion.

I again retired at the end of June 2020. I now devote more time to traveling with my wife, Louise, visiting our three adult children, spoiling our five grandchildren—two of whom are recently arrived identical twin girls—gardening, and reading history and English mysteries.

## William P. Hobson

I received my Juris Doctor degree from the University of North Carolina School of Law on May 30, 1971, and was admitted to the North Carolina Bar on August 14, 1971.

In December 1971, I joined the Charlotte Office of the North Carolina National Bank (predecessor to Bank of America) Personal Trust Department as an estate and trust administrative officer. I remained with the bank, rising to the position of vice-president and assuming the role as co-manager of the Charlotte Personal Trust Department and manager of the Personal Trust office (officers and staff) in Morganton.

In September 1983 I left the bank and joined the law firm of Dozier, Brackett, Miller, Pollard & Murphy (now the Dozier Miller Law Group) as the firm's probate & estate planning lawyer. Shortly after joining the firm, I became a partner. At the end of 2000 I resigned my partnership and became an independent contractor with the firm, continuing to practice on a semi-retired, part-time basis.

In 2019 I became pretty-much fully retired. However, I have thus far kept my law license active and continue to take the required CLE that allows me to do so.

My entire career with the bank and the law firm (nearly 48 years) was spent in Charlotte. In the fall of 2019, my wife and I moved to Buies Creek, North Carolina—getting back (almost) to my home in Dunn where I grew up.

## F. Fincher Jarrell

I was raised in Richmond County on a three mule cotton farm near the Pee Dee River. It was a wonderful place to grow up. My dad worked the farm and my mom

worked as an RN at the hospital in Wadesboro. I learned many life values from them, such as working hard and treating others with respect, which I sought to apply during my career as a lawyer.

After completing high school and UNC Chapel Hill, I taught english for a year at Myers Park High School in Charlotte, knowing all the while I wanted to go to UNC School of Law. However, I questioned this decision a few weeks after classes began. My civil procedure professor didn't particularly



Wagner Farm/Richard Fennell

care about my answer to a question he asked about the case we read and, while I was still standing, asked whether I had taken the LSAT. Visibly shaken, I barely said “yes” to which he responded, “Well can you tell me how the h\_\_\_ you got into this law school?” I sat down.

Nevertheless, I got through law school and joined the Charlotte firm of Kennedy Covington Lobdell & Hickman, which a few years ago merged into the mega firm K&L Gates. I practiced in the civil litigation area where I was privileged to be under the tutelage of two great trial lawyers: Hugh Lobdell, who could connect with juries better than most, and Charles Tompkins, who knew a case inside and out when he went to court. I enjoyed the challenges of a trial and especially liked trying cases in the smaller counties around Mecklenburg where I felt comfortable with the juries, probably because of my rural upbringing.

As I look back, one of my proudest moments as a lawyer grew out of a lengthy personal injury jury trial in Durham which involved four attorneys. Robert (Bob) Hobgood, an experienced and well respected superior court judge, was the trial judge. At its conclusion, Judge Hobgood spoke to all of the attorneys involved saying it was one of the best tried civil cases he had ever presided over. I still carry that praise with me and am certain the other attorneys do also. As an aside, Judge Hobgood tells the story that shortly after he went on the bench, he and his father, Superior Court Judge Hamilton Hobgood, were both holding court in Fayetteville. Judge Bob Hobgood was sentencing defendants who wished to enter guilty pleas. One of the defen-

dants stood up and told Judge Hobgood he didn’t know him and wanted to be sentenced by the judge in the other courtroom because that judge had sentenced him before. An example of the “back hall” stories lawyers and judges often traded, and which were an enjoyable part of being a trial lawyer.

Outside of my practice, I served on several local bar committees, including chair of the Calendar Committee for a year where we heard incredibly clever excuses for not placing a case on the trial calendar. For several years I coached youth baseball and basketball. I also proudly served nine years as a State Bar councilor for the 26th Judicial District, which was demanding but enjoyable work. I would add here that the State Bar staff quickly earned my admiration and respect for the work they do serving the lawyers and citizens of our state.

Finally, I wish to thank the State Bar Council for inviting me and my wife, Carol, here today. It is a memorable and most pleasant experience.

### **Cecil R. Jenkins Jr.**

Prior to 1970, I had met a lawyer by the name of Bedford Black of Kannapolis, NC. Bedford, at that time, was known as the best criminal lawyer in that area. He heard that I was headed to law school, and fortunately he asked me to contact him when I finished.

I graduated from the University of Tennessee School of Law in December 1970. I contacted Bedford and we were able to come to an agreement, so I went to work for him in January 1971. At that time, North Carolina only offered the bar exam once a year in August. During my first eight months of work, I evaluated his personal injury cases and

was able to prepare an appeal to the North Carolina Court of Appeals. We were successful with the appeal. While I was preparing for the bar exam, I received a call one morning at about 3 AM that Bedford had passed away. I decided that if I failed the bar exam, I would head back to Tennessee because they gave the bar exam twice a year, and I had a family. But I successfully passed the bar exam and went to Asheboro as soon as possible to be sworn in by the Honorable Robert Collier.

The next day the district attorney of Judicial District 19A, Bob Roberts, called to trial a superior court case that Mr. Black was handling. I had previously spoken with the client, and he wanted me to represent him. So, the first day of being a lawyer, I was trying a jury trial in the Cabarrus County Superior Court.

During my 50 years I have tried cases from the magistrate courts to the federal courts. Some of the cases I’ve tried that might be of interest include death by explosives, a nursing home death case, automobile accident cases, an arson case, a double murder in Rowan County, and two capital cases in Cabarrus County.

In the double murder case, a gentleman owned a gambling house known as the Dug Out. It became very busy on the weekends after the people were paid at the mill. One night things got out of hand. Two people were killed and another shot. The owner was told that if he took the blame for the murders, nothing would happen to him. Wrong. He confessed and was booked for murder. I was hired by his family, and when I went to talk with my client, he told me he didn’t do it and wanted to plead not guilty. We went to trial

and the jury came back with a not guilty verdict. During the trial I was not aware of the threats on my and my client's life. The judge ordered the sheriff of Rowan County to give us an escort to Cabarrus Courtly. I later lost the case of the person who was shot and lived, and my client's family accused me of selling him out, so I sent them to Allen Baily in Charlotte to handle the appeal.

Other than legal cases that have made an impression on me, I believe my legal background enabled me to be elected to the NC Senate to represent Mecklenburg and Cabarrus Counties for six years. I was the only person from Cabarrus to be elected to the senate when we were in the district with Mecklenburg. From several groups I received the award as senator of the year.

Being a lawyer for 50 years, I have seen a lot of changes in our profession. Some are good, and some I don't think much of.

In closing, I will only say a lot of people don't have any respect for lawyers unless the need arises—an attitude our profession needs to work on improving.

### **Joseph R. John Sr.**

Over the past 50 years, my license to practice law has taken me on a remarkable journey, sometimes as a necessary travel document, sometimes as an important piece of luggage. It was a mandatory necessity over more than half the trip and a valuable accessory as my voyage reached its later stages. But it was always there, especially its critical thinking, analytical, and communication tools, to be called upon and utilized, normally unconsciously but, upon consideration, rarely inappropriately and hopefully nearly always to

good end.

The itinerary has had a multiplicity of stops, some brief, others of significant duration—student at UNC School of Law, Legal Aid attorney, prosecutor, litigator in private practice, trial and appellate judge, mediator and arbitrator—supplemented with excursions as DMV deputy commissioner, director of the State Crime Laboratory, and, today, as legislator in the NC House of Representatives. As noted, the license constituted a necessary passport to some of these locations, while the skills and knowledge acquired and developed in achieving and maintaining it have impacted my travel throughout.

As the conclusion of this journey as a licensed attorney inexorably draws ever closer, I consider images of clients and citizens vindicated, decisions and opinions that established precedent and achieved fair results, state agencies markedly improved, and now, determined efforts to achieve legislative improvements to the administration of justice in our state. And I remember Mom challenging me with one of her favorite quotations: "Leave the world a little better than you found it. That's the best a man can ever do." A final grade under this standard may not ultimately be mine to mark, but from today's perspective of 50 years, I'd like to think Mom would pass favorably on the persistence and intensity of the endeavor.

A bit of advice: the life-long view and opinion of others regarding the landscape—the courts and our legal profession—through which I, as well as every licensed attorney, have traveled is usually most directly determined by their single, individual experience

with one of us (typically as a client in civil or criminal litigation). It is our ultimate responsibility, and I believe a requirement of the license conferred a half century ago, to act accordingly in every word and deed.

Final perspective: there is no substitute for effort, hard work, and thorough preparation. Nonetheless, spouse and family must not be neglected. There is nothing more important in life. Of the many titles I have held over the past 50 years, none has been more enduring or meaningful than "Dad."

### **Patricia E. King**

Hello fellow colleagues of the North Carolina State Bar.

I thank you for this recognition of my 50th anniversary of my licensure as a North Carolina attorney. It has truly been an honor and a privilege to serve the citizens of North Carolina and Mecklenburg County, in particular. My life's journey started with being born and raised in Chester, South Carolina, within a loving household headed by my parents, William and Ellen (Nelson) King. My father was a businessman, owner of King Funeral Home in Chester, SC, and my mother was a homemaker. I was the youngest of nine siblings. Being from a large family, I had to learn how to stand up for myself and make sure that my voice was heard. But I also knew that someone would be looking out and standing up for me when the time came.

My parents instilled in all of us the value of education. I graduated from Finley High School in Chester, SC, and continued my education at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, NC. I became involved in various school activities and joined my beloved soror-

ity, Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. I graduated from JCSU in 1965 with a BS degree in physical education. After graduation, I returned home to Chester and became a teacher at Southside Elementary School for a year (1965-1966) until being accepted at North Carolina Central University's School of Law in 1966. The civil rights movement was still in full swing, and it was a very dynamic time to be in law school. There were very few women in law school anywhere during that time. I had to learn my inner strength and listen to the voice of faith that my parents had instilled in me. (I had plenty of practice with my older siblings!) I graduated from NCCU's School of Law in 1969. Getting through the bar exam was not easy, but I had a lot of support, and I made it through. I was admitted to the North Carolina State Bar in 1971. I became

the first Black female to be admitted to the Mecklenburg County Bar.

I practiced with Attorney Charles V. Bell at his office located on Irwin Ave. in Charlotte from 1971-1991. I became a solo practitioner in 1991, opening the Law Offices of Patricia E. King, Esq. and practiced in the areas of family law, civil law, personal injury, wills, and estates. Also in 1991, I took over operations of King Funeral Home after my brother's (Edward "Sonny" King) death as a licensed funeral home director (licensed in NC and SC).

My family—my parents in particular—were so proud when I became a licensed attorney. My father had a special gleam in his eyes as we entered Mechanics & Farmers Bank in Charlotte, which was across the street from JCSU, to open a business account for my law

practice. He could not stop talking to everyone about me and reminded the bank employees to look out for me. That was one of my proudest moments of being an attorney. What really motivates me is offering assistance and helping others through difficult times, especially those who have relocated to Charlotte from South Carolina. All of my cases have been interesting, and I learned from each and every one of them. Everyone deserves a chance to be represented and to have their voices be heard in court, no matter what their social or economic status. I try to make my services affordable to clients, and in turn, those clients have afforded me an opportunity to help my family, provide jobs to those unable to obtain one in a traditional office setting, and to further serve the community through the funeral home services.

I have slowed down now, but I still believe that if I can help someone go through the court system, I'll do my best to serve and offer guidance. When I started in the legal profession, everyone knew each other or at least knew something about them. Now, there are so many lawyers out there and things move much faster. Technology is good and needed, but the camaraderie is not the same. It seems like we're getting more isolated. It makes good business sense to take the time to learn more about one another, whether it's a fellow lawyer, your client, or someone who could potentially be your client. You really must have a good work ethic and a dedicated staff to keep up with everything. With the computers, a lot of people can look up information and feel like they do not need an attorney. I think that with so much misinformation and misinterpretation, there is a greater



need for attorneys who are experienced, fair, and dedicated to equal representation in the court system.

My final advice is that you've got to work hard, start from the bottom, and work your way up. You will have ups and downs, but don't be afraid of the challenges in life. Thank you again for this opportunity to be recognized and to share my thoughts.

### **Carter T. Lambeth**

I was born at Duke Hospital on June 3, 1946, in Durham, North Carolina. I attended public schools in Winston-Salem and graduated from R. J. Reynolds High School in June 1964. I attended the University of the South (Sewanee) and obtained a BA degree in June 1968. Thereafter I attended the law school at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and obtained a juris doctorate degree in June 1971.

In August 1971 I began work for Murchison, Fox & Newton, a law firm in Wilmington, North Carolina. During my time with Murchison, Fox & Newton I was the city attorney for Southport from 1973 to 1979 and the Brunswick County social services attorney from 1974 to 1979.

In October 1979 the Honorable James B. Hunt Jr., the governor of North Carolina, appointed me as a district court judge for the Fifth Judicial District. I subsequently was elected to this position in 1980. I served in that capacity from 1979 to 1983, at which time I resumed the practice of law with the law firm of Marshall, Williams, Gorham & Brawley in Wilmington. In July 1983 I formed the partnership with Robert White Johnson known as Johnson and Lambeth,

Attorneys at Law. I practiced law with him in Wilmington until his retirement in June 2005. From that time until the present I have continued to practice law in Wilmington with Maynard Brown and Christopher Loutit.

I am still practicing law now in my own name of Carter T. Lambeth Attorney, PC. I do some limited criminal practice and I also represent the New Hanover County Child Support Services Agency. I have represented this agency as part of my practice since 1983. The areas of practice throughout my career have been family law, criminal law, municipal corporations, civil litigation, North Carolina Counsel for Asbestos Products Liability litigation in federal court actions, and extensive civil and criminal trial practice in all courts, including capital cases.

My professional affiliations have been with the North Carolina Bar Association, the American Bar Association, and the North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers.

With respect to certification, in 1971, I was admitted to practice law in North Carolina in the Eastern, Middle, and Western Districts of North Carolina Federal District Courts and the North Carolina Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit. In 1978 I was admitted to the United States Supreme Court Bar. In 1993 I was certified as an arbitrator for the Fifth Judicial District of North Carolina. In 1996 I was certified as a mediator for superior court civil actions, and in 1998 I was certified as a mediator in equitable distribution and other family financial cases in district court actions in North Carolina.

As far as organizations that I have been a member of, they include the Wilmington

Civitan Club; Southeastern Center for Mental Health Board; Board of Directors of Cape Fear Academy; YMCA Volunteer of the Year the Law Alumni Board of UNC-Chapel Hill the Wilmington International Airport Authority, serving as chair from 2001-2002, 2004-2005, and 2016-2017.

I am currently 75 years old and am still practicing law. I fly airplanes as a hobby.

### **Donald G. Lawrence**

I was born in Angier, North Carolina, on September 15, 1942, to Willis Raymond Lawrence and Mary Estelle Lawrence. I attended Garner and Cary, North Carolina, high schools. After attending North Carolina State University in Raleigh for my freshman year, I transferred to UNC where I graduated with a BS in business administration/accounting in January 1965. Following service in the army and a tour of duty in Vietnam as an infantry officer, (1965-1968), I enrolled in UNC School of Law in the fall of 1968, graduated in 1971, and was sworn into the practice of law in August 1971. After law school I joined Gordon Battle, attorney, in Chapel Hill and practiced law in Orange County for one year. Our office was initially above Orange Savings and Loan. Across the hall was a young man who said he was going to start a title insurance company that year. His name was Allan Fine, and his company became known as Investors Title Insurance Company.

I left Chapel Hill in 1972 with my brother, Willis Lawrence, who also graduated from UNC School of Law in 1971. Together with our wives and children, we travelled to the island of Guam to be employed as corporate attorneys. I left the island of Guam in 1976

with my wife and two children and started the private practice of law in Morehead City, North Carolina. In 1979, as president of the Carteret County Chamber of Commerce, I proposed a new name for the area, "NC's Crystal Coast," which continues today. In 1986 I remarried and had three more children, all of whom are grown and have gone on to various places around the globe. In addition to practicing real estate law for the past 25 years, I have developed numerous residential subdivisions in Eastern North Carolina and in the greater Triangle area, with amenities from swimming pools, tennis courts, golf courses, to waterfront.

One of my proudest moments in law and most interesting real estate cases was proving title to a large, wooded tract of land in Carteret County. The trial lasted for one week in Carteret County Superior Court, where I was able to locate the beginning point of the tract on the ground by a depression that was, by reputation, where an old red oak stump had once been, marking the corner of several patents going back to 1739. With the help of two genealogists, one of whom died prior to trial, and two surveyors as experts, one of whom had to be wheeled into court, I was able to prove the title and locate it on the ground. In 1739 the corner had been marked by a large red oak, but by the time of the Civil War, a partitioning had been initiated and the red oak tree was referred to as a stump. By the time of our case, it had become a depression in the ground, but with a reputation of where the red oak stump, and previously the tree, had once stood as a corner. The court's decision held.

Unfortunately, I see the residential real

estate closing business moving from law firms to title companies in the coming years.

As most sole practitioners will confirm, the general practice of law is a team effort, and without the help of excellent staff it could not be performed very well, if at all. My thanks go out over the years to Lisa Buck, Joann Dove, Kathy Richey, Loretta Palko, and last, but not least, Marsha Eddy who have spent countless hours helping me succeed in my profession by their professionalism and dedication to performing their tasks efficiently, accurately, and competently.

### **Jerry W. Leonard**

I was born in Virginia and moved to Raleigh in 1947 at age 2. I attended public schools in Raleigh and graduated from Broughton High School in 1963. I graduated from Hampden-Sydney College in 1967 and the UNC School of Law in the fall semester of 1970. I really enjoyed every year of my schooling. My undergraduate degree was in science, but I gradually began to know it was people that meant most to me, and that I needed to have contact with them. I think that was my motivation to go to law school.

My first job was as senior clerk to US District Judge Franklin T. Dupree. Afterwards, I went into a sole private practice, but always shared offices with other attorneys. From 1972 thru 1986 I rented the "Old Water Tower" in downtown Raleigh, and I shared offices with Tom Erwin, Debbie Mailman, Larkin Kirkman, Tim Jordan, and Harold Broadwell. However, from 1986-1994 I served as a district judge in Wake County. In 1995 I went back to private practice and shared offices first with Randolph

Riley, and later with Kyle Hall, Anna Smith, and Leza Driscoll.

My original interests in my practice were focused on the developing law of the then recently adopted civil rights and environment statutes. This was 1972, and the case law interpreting these statutes was not fully developed. However, my interest waned with the passage of time—the courts seemed to become more conservative, and my advocacy simply gave the courts the opportunity to push back against the driving force behind the 1960s policies. Going forward to 1995, my practice was again general in nature, but focused on mediation and arbitration. Also, since the beginning of my time in private practice in 1972, I have served on the appointment panel for the Federal Public Defender's Office. I still enjoy trying to figure out how to turn these criminal defendants around. Approximately 80% of federal prisoners are minorities, and it costs us \$32,000-plus per year to keep each one behind bars.

Some of my other activities included work with the Wake County Bar from 1972-75 to establish and maintain a "legal aid" clinic for people who could not afford an attorney. It was a "half time" job. This was before the federal Legal Services Corporation Act of 1975, which established legal aid offices across the US. After that act was passed, I took off and traveled for about 15 months and worked different jobs, including my favorite as a researcher at a legal aid clinic in Sausalito, Marin County, California. Then I returned to my old office with the same associates. However, between 1981 and 1986 I practiced part-time in Maryland, as my two brothers ran a boat charter business in Annapolis. I

assume that I am still an inactive member of the Maryland State Bar.

I guess most of my happiness in the law has been meeting all kinds of people and having a profession that can help some of these folks. That is how I look at the law and that is why I am still engaged in the practice of law. I also have had the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors for the Wake County Bar, the SPCA, Wake (and Johnston, and Harnett Counties) Legal Aid, NC Farm Workers Legal Services, and the NC Chapter of the American Civil Liberty Union.

Thank you.

### **Gene W. Matthews**

I grew up on a farm south of Charlotte and attended East Mecklenburg High School. I received my undergraduate degree in mathematics and history from UNC-Chapel Hill in 1967 and enrolled in UNC School of Law that fall, which was still being held in old Manning Hall.

In the middle of the first year of law school, our class lost all graduate student draft deferments, and many in our “class of 1970” had to scramble to continue in law school. At the end of my second year, with the draft board breathing down my neck, I enlisted in the US Marine Corps Reserve, served six months active duty, and was able to graduate from law school in May 1971. Shortly thereafter I had a unique legal experience. I spent over three years with a US government commission settling World War II claims in Micronesia that had to be administratively adjudicated after the US and Japanese governments finally agreed to provide the compensation money. Technically the residents of the

former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands were third party neutrals during WWII. Under international law they were entitled for payment for loss of life, injury, and damage to property. (Ken Hipp, who also graduated from UNC School of Law with me and took the NC bar exam in 1971, also worked on this same foreign claims settlement program.) My wife and I lived on Saipan in the Marianas Islands, but we travelled all over Micronesia to very remote areas and atolls in the Caroline and Marshall Islands, investigating war damage, adjudicating claims, and handling administrative appeals.

After returning to the US, I served for 25 years (1979-2004) under five different presidential administrations as chief legal officer for the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. During that time, my staff and I handled a wide range of precedent-setting public health law issues, and litigated key public health lawsuits and civil discovery cases.

From 2006 to the present, I have been teaching courses on leadership in health law and ethics for the UNC Executive Doctoral Program in Health Leadership at the Gillings School of Global Public Health. I also am the principal investigator for the Network for Public Health Law’s Southeastern Region based at UNC and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In this capacity I help a team of 40 lawyers provide legal technical assistance, training, and national networking to public health officials, nonprofit organizations, and academics on public health matters. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic two years ago, it has been a non-stop scramble to assist public health depart-

ments cope with the legal and policy controversies that have arisen. Over the past two decades, I have also provided leadership for the founding and development of the modern public health law movement.

On reflection, I have had a blessed 40 year public health legal career spanning many major events: I was in the room when the first four AIDS cases were reported at the CDC director’s staff meeting in 1981. I was planning the first national public health law conference on 9/11/2001 when the planes hit the World Trade Center and anthrax was released into the US Postal System. Since early 2020 I have been providing national technical assistance during this worst pandemic of a century. Recently I received the Distinguished Career Award of the Public Health Law Association “...in recognition of a career devoted to using law to improve the public’s health.”

My wife and I have two children and four grandchildren, and we now live in Chapel Hill. I seem to have flunked retirement, but I consider myself a lucky member of the NC Bar Class of 1971.

### **Charles K. McCotter Jr.**

I was born in New Bern, North Carolina, in 1946. I graduated from New Bern High School in 1964 and from the University of North Carolina in 1968 with a BS in business. In August 1968 I married the love of my life, Pat Byrum of Edenton. A month later I began attending the University of North Carolina School of Law, and graduated and passed the bar exam in 1971.

Our first daughter, Ginny, was born in September 1970 as I entered my third year of

law school, and my daughter Trish was born in 1976, while I practiced law. Pat and I enjoyed raising our girls in New Bern, spending the days boating, fishing, and swimming.

In 1971 I began my legal career as a law clerk for the Honorable John D. Larkins Jr., United States District Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina. On January 1, 1973, I set up my solo law practice in my hometown of New Bern. I developed a trial practice and quickly learned that hard work and preparation were the keys to success.

One of the most unusual trial venues was a court martial held in the recreation room in the Coast Guard Station at Hatteras Inlet. The rec room pool table served as defense table. In support of a motion for mistrial, I rolled the eight ball across the pool table arguing that the convening authority's conduct placed my client "behind the eight ball." The judge granted my motion for a mistrial.

In August 1979 I was appointed as a United States magistrate judge. I tried many complex federal civil cases, including many admiralty and maritime cases such as boating accidents and crewmember injury. These maritime cases gave me experience in comparative negligence cases.

I was on the ground floor in the development of alternative dispute resolution in the Eastern District of North Carolina, which paralleled this development in the North Carolina Courts. I find that the key to successful mediation is patience and active listening to determine the needs and goals of the parties.

I retired from the federal bench in 1995 at the age of 48 and returned to private practice. I now have my own solo law practice and I am

also Of Counsel with Zaytoun, Ballew, and Taylor, excellent and successful trial lawyers.

Pat and I continue this journey together. She supports me, encourages me, and listens to me patiently. I have passion for the practice of law, for representing my clients to the best of my ability, and to seek justice, love, mercy, and walk humbly with my God.

## **Walter B. Patterson II**

I entered UNC as a freshman in 1954, and graduated from law school 17 years later. Here's my story.

I was born in Winston-Salem, NC, on June 6, 1936, 40 miles from my mother's hometown, Statesville. My father, a career army officer, had met my mother in Statesville, as it was the base of his liaison duties to reserve units in Western NC. I have lived in Statesville two thirds of my life. The other third included a mixture of locations throughout the US and overseas, first with my family during my father's career, then my four years of military service, and seven years with USINS. My last assignment with USINS was San Juan, Puerto Rico, where I met, fell in love with, and married Haydee Muxworthy-Llabres and renewed my long-delayed desire to be a lawyer. Two months after our marriage in March 1969, I began June classes in the UNC accelerated law school program (four semesters and six summer sessions). Haydee began her stint as secretary to the football staff, working in the Kenan Stadium Field House near the law school. Her position included a reserved parking space adjacent to the field house close to the law school, and seats to all football games and basketball games. Even in 1969, when we started, those

were great perks.

Although I was 32 when I began law school, my accelerated group and the classes of 1970-72 included many who had postponed law school for a variety of reasons, resulting in a very diverse group. I obtained a part-time job as an assistant in the Institute of Government, which was also an intellectual stimulus perk. An interesting side note—the NC Highway Patrol legal training classes were then taught by the criminal law section at the institute. Following graduation, I returned to my hometown with Haydee to begin practice with two childhood friends and UNC alumnae (John G. Lewis and Douglas Eisele). In 1987, Doug left to start a new firm. John and I continued our practice as Lewis & Patterson until his retirement in 2014. I retired in 2016.

As most beginning attorneys, I began accepting clients in about every area of the law, especially searching real estate titles and representing clients in district court. Thereafter I devoted my time to a wide variety of law (bankruptcy, criminal, and family law as well as continuing with real estate and business and estate areas). Over the years I began increasingly helping more clients who had been denied social security disability benefits. My start in this area began in 1974 when the clerk in our local federal courthouse called me to say there was a lady there who needed help to sue the federal government, and I needed to talk to her. She sent this lady over to my office and she arrived with papers that said she had 60 days to petition in federal court to review her denial. At the time, she was in her early 50s and had worked most of her life as a nurse. She previously had abdominal surgery and several mental breakdowns. I

began my research, filed the petition, and ultimately argued before Federal Judge Woodrow Jones. He granted the appeal, sending her case back to social security for a new hearing, which we won, and her benefits both retroactive and future began. By similar cases and word of mouth, by mid-1980 the majority of my practice was representing these clients, and by the mid-1990s it became my entire practice. Over time I met other attorneys practicing this specialty. I began an informal correspondence with others and we arranged periodic meetings to discuss our common interests. I called it LFSSDG (Loosely Formed Social Security Disability Group). Our correspondence grew to over 100 attorneys with periodic meetings and lectures across the state. With critical help from several attorneys (especially Hank Wansker and Charles Hall), our group was formalized and recognized as a specialty section of the NC State Bar in the early 1990s. The participation in this successful effort is perhaps my proudest moment as a lawyer.

Haydee and I have been married 53 years and we have raised our two sons to be independent, responsible, and successful individuals. One son is married to our wonderful daughter-in-law, and we have two grandchildren. My life as a community citizen, separate from my law practice, has been full with service in our Episcopal Church, locally and regionally, and community involvement on various non-profit boards, especially Habitat for Humanity, our local "Y," and Young Life.

Our profession has changed largely due to increased growth, specialization, and automation, not unlike the general population; however, my hope for our profession is that we

continue to respond as advocates for our profession to the Shakespearian line, "first kill all the lawyers" in a sustained effort, then our profession and society will be okay.

### **Ann Reed Dunn**

I grew up in Kinston, the only child of a lawyer father. Naturally, a lot of his friends were lawyers, and I was always struck by the fact that they all seemed to like what they did. Even so, it might not have occurred to me that a woman could be a lawyer—except for the fact that my father made a point of introducing me to several women who had become lawyers. I still remember meeting his friend Naomi Morris on a fishing pier at Atlantic Beach when I was about ten years old. She would go on to become chief judge of the North Carolina Court of Appeals, the first woman to hold that position.

When I decided to go to law school, I didn't have a clear idea of what kind of legal career I wanted, and with only four other women in my class, there was no particular focus on career opportunities for women in law. During the summer between my second and third years, I got a job as an intern in the Attorney General's Office. I liked the work and the people there, and when I was offered a job during my last year of law school, my career path was set.



*Sampson County Field/Micah Mullen*

I was one of ten lawyers who started working in the Department of Justice in September 1971. Two of us were women, which brought the total number of women attorneys in the department up to three. My first office was a large room in the basement of the Justice Building. I shared that awful room with two of my UNC classmates and recall thinking, "I cannot do this for 30 years."

Thirty-nine years later, I couldn't imagine

not doing it! I'm very proud of my career in the public sector. I had the privilege of working for six different attorneys general as well as many talented colleagues, two of whom, Beverly Lake and Burley Mitchell, later became chief justice of our Supreme Court, and a third, Sid Eagles, later became chief judge of our court of appeals. My first boss, Robert Morgan, became a US Senator. Rufus Edmisten became secretary of state, Lacy Thornburg became a federal district court judge, and both Mike Easley and Roy Cooper were elected governor of North Carolina.

Most of my colleagues, of course, were simply the lawyers who handle the state's legal business on a daily basis. That includes handling significant cases that make the headlines, but it also includes handling the routine matters that never make the news or attract any public notice. Eventually I became a senior deputy attorney general and managed a large division of attorneys who represented the state in matters ranging from tort claims and elections to mental health and public assistance.

In 1989 I was elected to the State Bar Council, and in 2000 I was sworn in as president of the State Bar, the first woman and first public sector attorney to hold that position. I eventually served on the Disciplinary Hearing Commission and the Client Security Fund Board of Trustees, where I saw firsthand the damage that bad lawyers can do. That was hard, but it was also an opportunity to see a well-run regulatory system, and in the case of the Client Security Fund, it was an opportunity to see how that system can fix some of the bad stuff.

I was fortunate to be able to work in two great public sector agencies, and my career has

been everything I hoped it would be and more. The "more" is my wonderful family. I have two daughters, one of whom is a public sector lawyer. The other has her PhD in French literature and works for the public school system in Virginia. They have given me three absolutely perfect grandchildren, who light up my life on a daily basis. My husband, Glenn Dunn, is a partner at Poyner Spruill, where he has had an outstanding career as an environmental lawyer. But he is my life partner, and it is that partnership that has enabled me to "have it all!"

### **Alexander P. Sands III**

Fifty years in one page. That is almost as impossible as it was to understand an exam question in Dean Phillip's first year civil procedure class. Trover, Assumpsit, Replevin—the only person in the state who did not believe that North Carolina would ever adopt the Rules of Civil Procedure. The practice of law has changed substantially since then. Some changes have been good, and, in my opinion, others not so good.

I was very fortunate to have been in a small-town general practice for 25 years. This is where most of my opinions and passions about the practice of law were formed. Young lawyers were allowed, and required, to do more for their profession and for their communities then. This was a great opportunity to understand why we entered this profession, and to accept some of the responsibilities that went with the benefits of being considered a professional. For instance, after having practiced for less than a year, I saw my first jury trial from beginning to end. It happened to be a first degree murder case, where I was the

court appointed, and sole, attorney for the defendant. Frankly, I was as scared as my client. I had to make up for lack of experience with extra effort on the ground, holding the full belief that my client was innocent. Fortunately, for my client and me, he was acquitted. I did try several more first degree cases, but none were quite as memorable as the first one. (Later, as I worked for several larger firms, I was able to accurately state that I was the only person in the firm to have tried a first degree murder case and drawn a will—not for the same person.)

Although I did my share of office practice, such as wills and estates, business transactions, and real estate, I soon focused on litigation, where I thought I could do the most to fulfill my goal "to help people." I was involved in criminal defense work, administrative hearings, and civil litigation. One of the brightest memories I have is driving home from superior court in Wentworth with a 17 year old who had just been freed on a charge of arson. As I let him out in his front yard and drove away, I can still see him being mobbed by his parents and siblings, who had doubted they would ever be able to touch him again.

I was also able to represent a family that was devastated when hit by a drunk driver. The only hope they had was to go against the bar where he was served. I was told by my partners, and others, that it was hopeless. North Carolina did not have dram shop liability. However, against huge odds, we were able to get the law changed, to allow dram shop liability, and to give this family, and families in the future, some of the justice they deserve.

I was fortunate to have been elected to the

NC Senate with the hope of continuing my effort to help the people and State of North Carolina. I tried to use my knowledge of the law, and my experiences of dealing with people, to make this state better for all. In four terms, I focused on legislation to protect due process, and to advance the judicial system. My first enacted legislation, which I pushed with a passion, was a bill to limit the number of interrogatories to 50. (I have been thanked by many attorneys over the years for this overdue, common sense reform.) Other legislative matters which I accomplished include: the first required pre-trial mediation, headlights, and windshield wipers, requiring an operating speedometer (improper equipment), the first anti-stalking law, reform of the insanity defense, sentencing reform, corporate law rewrite, merging the workers' compensation trust funds, other insurance reforms, along with many other clarifying and technical amendments. I really felt I had made a difference in the administration of justice in North Carolina.

After my service in the senate, I was recruited to start a government relations practice with a large law firm—quite a difference for a small-town lawyer. I subsequently worked with other large, multi-state firms. I focused on lobbying and administrative law. I was also fortunate to be one of the attorneys who handled Smith/Shaver/Bailey related tax and retirement cases, which resulted in over a billion dollars returned to the taxpayers of North Carolina, with interest, for illegally collected state taxes. (Can you imagine sitting across the table from opposing counsel and turning down a \$400,000,000 settlement offer without even blinking? As you see, it

worked out.)

I see a huge contrast in the practice of law from my beginning as a small-town lawyer to a member of a large, multi-state firm. (I might add that I have recently become a sole practitioner again, which is quite refreshing.) On the issue of conflicts, my senior partner, Theodore Bethea, who was a State Bar councilor, serving on the Ethics Committee for many years, told me early in my practice that if I had to ask about it, I probably should not do it. Now, we have built "Chinese walls" and waivers to get around that basic tenet to create more business opportunities. We are turning our best lawyers into managers or salesmen and not rewarding the actual practitioners, but rather those who originate or manage clients for others. Sometimes the practice of law seems to be more concerned about generating income than focused on practicing law. There has also been a trend in the way some larger clients view the modern practice of law. This change is being accepted by the profession as the cost of doing business. The trend consists of larger clients trying to control independent legal judgment by imposing client-predetermined time and resource allocations, enforced by payment restrictions. I do not support "padding" of bills, but I do advocate for the ability to use sound, independent legal judgment so the client can make his decision based on the best advice available, not just the cheapest.

As our profession evolves over the next 50 years, let us not morph into a widget factory, looking only at bottom lines and profits, but be more concerned about the depth of a client's problem, rather than the depth of his pocket. We need to be a profession that its

members and the general population can point to with pride. We also need to provide services to the citizens of the rural areas of our state and smaller communities, like Reidsville. Let us remember, respond to, and answer that piercing question that Attorney, Governor, and Senator Terry Sanford posed in the title to his book: "But What About the People?"

## **John M. Silverstein**

My greatest accomplishment occurred during law school when I married Leslie Loeb. As natives of West Virginia and Kentucky, it did not take us long to decide that we wanted to make our home in North Carolina. With the help of my headhunter and UNC law school classmate, the late Henry Poole, I was able to secure a position with the Attorney General's Office. In addition to Henry and other UNC classmates Ann Reed (the first woman to be president of the State Bar), George Boylan, and the late Hunt Baxter, the AG's staff also included future NC Supreme Court Chief Justices I. Beverly Lake Jr. and Burley Mitchell, and future NC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Sid Eagles. The AG's office was a wonderful place to start my legal career.

Another member of the AG's staff at the time was Howard Satsky, with whom I formed Satsky & Silverstein in 1976. Howard's son, Keith, joined us more than 25 years ago, and David Gadd has been with us for the last five years. It is truly a law firm based on family. Our first two employees, Joyce King and Brenda Milam, each worked for us for more than 25 years. Brenda's sister and all three of her children have worked for us at one time or another, and David Gadd is



Brenda's son-in-law. I have been fortunate to share Howard's pride in seeing Keith develop as an outstanding lawyer, and to see David seamlessly take over most of my work and do it better.

Far and away the most rewarding aspect of my professional career was the opportunity to serve as a State Bar councilor and as an officer of the State Bar. The State Bar has a remarkable staff, and the attorneys with whom I served on the State Bar Council were not only hard-working representatives of their districts, but they also became close friends in the process. My experience with the State Bar

forms the foundation for my outlook for the future of our profession. I doubt that many people could have predicted developments like Zoom, AI, or the impacts of a pandemic, but I do believe that so long as the State Bar and our affinity bar groups remain intimately involved in continuing to address the manner in which and by whom legal services are delivered to the public in North Carolina, the legal profession will remain in good hands.

My career path has been blessed, thanks in no small part to the help and support of friends and colleagues, and, most importantly, my professional and real families. I am proud

to be a 50-year lawyer.

### **Claude Ernest Simons Jr.**

50 years is a long time; two-thirds of my entire life, but that's how long I've been practicing law...with the same law firm except for my first year as a research assistant on the North Carolina Supreme Court. During my third year at Wake Forest School of Law, I accepted a one-year position as research assistant to Justice I. Beverly Lake. That brought me to Raleigh where I have remained until this day. At Justice Lake's insistence, I scheduled an interview with the Smith Anderson law firm which, having only six lawyers, was one of the larger firms in Raleigh. On the Sunday before my scheduled Monday interview, one of the senior lawyers in the firm, Willis Smith, was killed in an airplane accident, which delayed my interview a week or so. On my interview day, I was really impressed with and liked the attorneys who participated in my interview and, fortunately, they liked me enough to offer me a job which I, along with a new UNC law graduate, Dan Rizzo, accepted and started work in the fall of 1972. We became the seventh and eighth lawyers in the firm. Over the next 49 years, the firm transitioned into the largest firm headquartered in Raleigh with approximately 140 lawyers.

My first assignments involved insurance defense work, mainly in auto cases; the cases eventually evolved into serious personal injury and death cases; products liability such as automobile, mesothelioma, and asbestos cases, and workers' compensation cases such as byssinosis, i.e., brown lung. Two cases stand out: a medical malpractice case brought by an

NCSU football player against an orthopedic surgeon alleging improper care of a broken leg and ankle; and a “wrongful birth/life” case brought by a lady who claimed she received inadequate genetic counseling. That case, which we won at trial, went to the NC Supreme Court, then to the US Supreme Court where cert was denied.

I will forever remain grateful to the senior lawyers in the firm when I started. They were great mentors who wanted you to be successful. They also became close friends in the process. Even though most of those mentors are no longer with us, I still think about what their advice, guidance, and counsel would be when faced with a challenging situation. To them, and all my colleagues at Smith Anderson, past and present, I owe a giant debt of gratitude and thanks.

### **Edwin M. Speas Jr.**

Oh my, here I am 50 years later. Let me count some of my blessings—no State Bar complaints or Rule 11 sanctions; lots of able adversaries who often were my best teachers; many patient, forgiving, and talented colleagues; a long list of opportunities to represent remarkable public officials and other clients in interesting and consequential cases I could never have imagined growing up in Boonville, NC; and, most important, an amazing spouse, two talented kids (who are far better parents than we were), and four special grandkids.

My 50 years at the bar began in the spring of 1971. Robert Morgan, then attorney general and later United States senator, offered staff attorney positions at the NC Department of Justice to ten new law school

graduates starting September 1. I accepted, thinking that a couple of years of public service would provide a good transition back home to Northwest North Carolina, perhaps practicing with my WFU law school classmate from Sparta, Richard Doughton. Thirty-three years later I retired from DOJ and began my second career at Poyner Spruill, where I remain today.

In my early years at the DOJ, the wise, guiding hands of extraordinary lawyers like Andy Vanore, Burley Mitchell, Carroll Leggett, Charlie Lloyd, Jack Safran, and Bernie Harrell were invaluable. They helped me overcome my lack of attention in law school and, more importantly, avoid any lasting damage to the public and the public servants we represented and advised. My good luck continued at Poyner Spruill where Cecil Harrison, Bo Dempster, and Dan Cahill patiently helped me make the transition from the public sector to the private sector and gave me a lot of freedom to pursue my interests.

Perhaps the most important lesson I have learned along the way is that litigation is a team sport. Just like winning on the ball field, success in the courtroom depends to a great extent on melding the different strengths of individual lawyers into an effective team of advocates to clearly and precisely explain their client’s position. Some lawyers see “the big picture” and others quickly identify the detail that in the end matters most; some lawyers are gifted writers and others are strong oral advocates; some lawyers are amazing researchers and others expert at putting on evidence. And, of course, all these lawyerly strengths come to nothing without staff to keep those talented lawyers organized, equipped, on

time, and in the right place. To celebrate my 50 years in practice, I want to recognize some of my amazing and talented teammates over those years, both at DOJ (Verna Wentz, Boots Bowen, Carol Holt, Betsy Bunting, Laura Crumpler, Kaye Webb, Tom Ziko, David Parker, Ben Irons, David Broome, Norma Harrell, Tiare Smiley, Jim Smith, Ron Marquette, Tom Moffitt, Dan McLawhorn, David Blackwell, Joan Erwin, and the late IB Hudson) and at Poyner Spruill (Caroline Mackie, Steve Epstein, Eric Stevens, David Dreyfus, and Stacey Herring).

Thanks to all of you for getting me this far, mostly undamaged. I am very grateful.

### **Allen R. Tew**

“You sure do like to argue. You’ll make a good lawyer.” The seed was planted by Sallie Rogers, my maternal grandmother, when I was around 13.

About 14 years later, after graduating from Clayton High School ('62), UNC-CH ('66), and the University of South Carolina Law School ('71), and passing the NC and SC bar exams, Granny’s seed sprouted when I was sworn in to practice law in NC on August 14, 1971, and SC in October 1971. I grew up in Clayton with my parents and a brother. As the son of a dentist and teacher, both of whom were the first of their families to get a college education, expectations were high. Frank, and I roomed together for three years at Carolina; he went on to become a doctor. Hopefully, had they lived longer—Mother died in 1967, and Daddy in 1975—they would have been proud.

The seed sprouted and began to grow when I returned to Clayton in 1971 to practice with

George Mast for 17 years. He was a patient mentor. We parted good friends and remain so today. For the last 32 years I have practiced primarily on my own. My longevity, enjoyment, and any success I have had is due to my uncommon good fortune of working alongside my secretary/paralegal, Sheila Blackmon, for 32 years and counting.

My practice areas have been vast and varied, ranging from real estate, wills, estates, small business, transactions, criminal defense, family law, civil litigation including personal injury, real estate matters, a state class action suit, and a civil rights action against the Town of Clayton. Today, my practice areas are significantly reduced as specialization increases. However, it provides different, interesting, stimulating, and challenging issues which make the practice enjoyable and rewarding. My pay has been equally varied ranging from sweet potatoes, squash, corn, cucumbers, and Johnston County white liquor. I was promised a ham which didn't materialize. When I asked what happened, I was told that the cat got in the smoke house and got it. When asked how he could tell the cat got mine, he said, "The cat got only one, so I figured it must've been yours."

With the support and encouragement of Phyllis, my wife of 41 years and counting, we have raised and educated five children ages 40 to 53, all of whom are responsible citizens, who have provided us with eight grandchildren thus far and no cash calls.

Living and practicing where I grew up has been wonderful. I have been able to live in one place and create new relationships and maintain relationships of up to five generations. I enjoy reading, golfing, swimming, surf fishing,

and most importantly spending time with my family and friends.

I am most proud of litigating a civil rights action against my hometown with NC Supreme Court Justice Anita Earls. I carried her books. I miss the collegiality and civility of the earlier days, the decline of which I attribute to technology.

There will always be a need for our profession. The challenge will be providing affordable legal services to all americans.

Practicing law is an honor and a privilege. It has been challenging, humbling, enjoyable, and rewarding. Hopefully I have had some significant positive impact on my clients' lives. Ultimately, I hope to be a good lawyer.

## **William M. Trott**

Reflecting on 50 years of law practice during the brutal Russian invasion of Ukraine makes me realize how fortunate we have been to have lived and practiced law in a country with a strong and well-established legal system. While our system is imperfect, as are all human endeavors, adherence to the rule of law distinguishes Anglo-American-type legal systems from those in totalitarian regimes that still dominate much the world's population.

We say we live in a "democracy," which is largely true, but our society is equally founded on the protection of individual rights through our legal system. Democracy does not mean that two wolves and a lamb vote by majority rule on what to eat for dinner. Concepts such as free speech and religion, equal protection, and due process provide foundational rights to individuals and their endeavors. Over many generations, lawyers have so engrained those rights into our society that they cannot

be altered by the whims of a tyrant.

We are indebted to our founding fathers, most of whom were trained in the law, who courageously adopted concepts of the Enlightenment, many of which were radical and unproven theories at the time. They crafted a complicated system of checks and balances and individual rights. That system, enhanced by wise and strong jurists, has lasted well over 200 years. The full-throated enforcement of individual rights by lawyers protects individuals from governmental neglect and overreach. The technical skill of lawyers provides the certainty in commercial relationships that enables our citizens to innovate and our economy to thrive. We who have been working in this system for 50 years have seen and played a part in the significant improvements in the system's fairness.

Unfortunately, the very nature of what we do as lawyers—operating in an adversarial system involving human foibles and private motives—assures us of contempt as a profession. Studies show, however, that clients overwhelmingly like and respect their own lawyers, and that is the best gauge of the public's view of lawyers. Lawyers have a superior ability to spot issues, weed out irrelevancies, detect hidden motivations, and achieve acceptable settlements. The fact that we are well trained, client oriented, and not exclusively money driven makes what we do a learned profession, not merely an occupation.

The hallmark of great lawyering is not about academic knowledge of the law, but rather is about the ability to provide sound judgment in applying that law when advising clients how to approach the risks they face. Such judgment comes through experience

and interaction with older lawyers. Practicing law requires long hours and attention to detail that is highly stressful and often underappreciated by our clients, friends, and families. Our best work cannot be felt or seen, and we don't often get positive feedback. These difficulties are offset by the fact that we get to use our brains all day, every day. We must take comfort in the adage that "hard work is its own reward."

Lawyers volunteer vast amounts of time helping nonprofit organizations with little recognition of its true *pro bono* nature. Such organizations play massively important roles in the quality of our lives. They need the knowledge, judgment, and problem-solving abilities that come naturally to lawyers. My proudest accomplishments as a lawyer have been in helping such organizations.

### **William W. Webb**

I came to North Carolina from California in September 1968 to attend UNC School of Law. My friends at Stanford wondered why in the world I would want to go to a "backwater" state like North Carolina. My wife, whom I had just married, was from New Jersey and wanted to get back to the east coast near her family, and being a clairvoyant, saw nothing terribly appealing about California. And my father was originally from Thomasville and had graduated from UNC in 1929 (he later roomed with Henry Brandis in New York, long before he became dean of the law school, of course). Incidentally, my California friends who had so disparaged my decision back in 1968 now cannot wait to leave "The Golden State" and beat a path to the "Tar Heel State."

My first real job after graduation from law school was with Robert Morgan's Attorney General's Office along with my classmates, Ann Reed, Bill Guy, and Henry Poole. I recall Senior Deputy Harry McGaillard telling us young lawyers that his office door would "always be open" to us; he might not be there, but his door would always be open. So, I spent six-plus years working in the State Department of Justice in the 1970s.

General Morgan required that we all make audio recordings regarding matters that we were working on, which he would allegedly listen to on his way to and from Lillington, where he lived, to Raleigh. No one was ever brazen enough to call him on it. And once he got wind that Burley Mitchell and others were

cutting out early on Friday afternoons to spend collegial time discussing cases and legal issues with colleagues at the PR, he began scheduling mandatory weekly seminars on Fridays, presented by different sections of the AG's Office. General Morgan was no dummy, and he was a tough and demanding boss.

One highly educational and productive task required of all the attorneys in the office, and a task continued by General Morgan's successor, Rufus Edmisten (my partner for the past 20 years), was to research, write, and argue before the appellate court criminal case briefs. In my time with the AG's Office, I bet I handled over 100 such cases and found new meaning to the term "harmless error."

In 1978 or 1979 I left the AG's Office



William Henry Stevens/Untitled

when I was offered the position of civil section chief of the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina. It was pure litigation, especially since, during my tenure, the office was relatively small, so we all pitched in trying criminal cases. If you wanted to learn how to really try a case, you'd spend some time in the US Attorney's Office—particularly if Visiting Judge Robert Mehige Jr. was in town. You could learn more from being in Judge Mehige's courtroom for a two-week term than from spending three years in law school. I loved every minute of my years there and made great friends like Dennis Moore and Tommy Manning. I would say that it was the highlight of my legal career.

From the US Attorney's Office, I went into private practice, where I have been for the past 40 years. Some of my memories:

- Lobbying with my beloved partner J. Melville Broughton. He taught me basically all I know about lobbying. After he passed, I essentially quit lobbying.

- Running for Congress in 1986. Asked a voter what I thought of an energy bill, I told him I thought he should pay it. Lost the election.

- Representing NC State Basketball Coach, Jim Valvano and trying to get him not to speak to the media. One of the funniest people and the best public speaker I ever heard—and a really good guy. Could write a book about him.

- Closing a puppy mill down in Lee County on behalf of the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

- Every courtroom experience before the Honorable Terrence Boyle, one of my favorite

people. You may win, you may lose, but you will never forget the experience. Come prepared!

- Practicing law with Rufus and my son, Woody Jr. (best lawyer-tennis player in NC).

That's it folks.

## **Reich L. Welborn**

I find it to be almost unbelievable that I am celebrating 50 years as a practicing attorney, but here we are.

This has been a very rewarding journey, not only for me, but also for my spouse and my two children, for without their understanding, support, and patience, I would not be celebrating 50 years as a practicing attorney.

I have been very lucky all along the way. It all began when I "lucked into" a clerkship with what was then a small firm in Durham upon returning from active duty with the army reserves. That was during what was then my third year of law school. My wife and I were already married, she was working on campus in Chapel Hill, so I needed to find a job to help with expenses before going back to law school for the third year.

As it turned out, although I had other offers, I knew that the firm with which I was clerking was the place for me. Very lucky.

And during my years of practice, I have been very fortunate to be blessed with wonderful clients, many of whom have been clients for those entire 50 years. I am not sure many lawyers have been so blessed, but I feel truly humbled by the fact that I have clients who have been with me for all or most of these 50 years.

I have also been lucky to have some of the

most amazing lawyers in this state as my law partners and mentors for those 50 years. There are too many to name here, but they include the senior partners at the firm with which I began in 1971, my partners for almost 30 years at Moore & Van Allen, and my current partners and colleagues at Manning Fulton.

Practicing law is not "easy;" in fact, the challenges associated with the private practice seem to have become more challenging in recent years notwithstanding all the technological advances we now enjoy in our law practices. But one constant in my law career has been those living examples of what it means to be a true professional with the highest levels of integrity, ethics, and a genuine concern for their clients and also their fellow practitioners.

Being a practicing lawyer opened numerous doors to civic and community service, which include: president of my local judicial district bar and voluntary bar association (Durham), board member and vice-president of the NC Bar Association, committee chair and section council member within the NC Bar Association, president of the NC Jaycees, board member of various local charitable and community organizations, and service through my church. I continue to try to honor these lines from the Jaycee Creed: That government should be of laws rather than of men, and that service to humanity is the best work of life.

So let me close by repeating, I am one lucky 50-year lawyer, who is very proud to be a North Carolina lawyer and a member of this profession that is so vitally important to our democracy and the rule of law.

Thank you.

## O. Richard Wright Jr.

In 1803 my great-great-great-grandfather Isaac Wright moved from Sampson County to an undeveloped area on the Brunswick County/Bladen County line with that portion of Bladen and Brunswick becoming Columbus County in 1808. He and his son, Stephen Wright, put together 8,000 acres. Stephen Wright married Amelia Fowler whose father, John Fowler, was a patriot at the Battle of Moore's Creek. Stephen and Amelia, between 1819 and 1843, became the parents of 13 sons and 3 daughters. Each of the children received 500 acres, and I grew up on a portion of the 500 acre tract conveyed to my great-grandfather Richard Wright, who married Sarah White. My dad built a house next to the dwelling, where he and the 12 children were reared. Each Sunday there might be 40 aunts, uncles, cousins, and other relatives visiting my grandparents. Family became very important. The Wright reunion began in 1882, and I have chaired it since 1974.

Raymond Mallard had started a practice in Tabor City in 1932, and had married Lula McGougan who lived to be 102. From time-to-time Raymond would travel out to the farm from Tabor City and bring Emma Harrelson Bell and her sister Virginia Harrelson Bell, who were first cousins to my granddaddy Wright and second cousins to my grandmother Wright. I was always impressed by Raymond Mallard. In 1951 he brought into the practice Frank McGougan, and the firm became known as Mallard & McGougan. Frank was our family attorney and had an outstanding knowledge of the law

and the ability to relate with anyone.

While I was still in my senior undergraduate year at Chapel Hill and had been accepted into law school, Frank McGougan confirmed that if I would help him each summer and each holiday, when I passed the bar the firm would be known as McGougan and Wright. This was a great experience and I served as a paralegal and learned so much about title searches, interviewing clients, and often attended trials with Frank. In 2011 the firm became Wright, Worley, Pope, Ekster & Moss, PLLC as successor to The Mallard Firm. I have been with the firm for 50 years.

Three years after passing the bar I was elected to the first of seven terms in the NC House. I served with many outstanding lawyers, such as Bee Holt, Ed Holmes, Jimmy Love, Jack Stevens, Bob Farmer, Wade Smith, Martin Lancaster, Charles Evans, Herbert Hyde, Dave DeRamus, Horton Roundtree, Joe Hackney, George Miller, and so many more. Jack Stevens was serving in the house when I was elected in 1974. In 1991 Jack telephoned to ask if I would be willing to be nominated to a position on the Board of Lawyers Mutual Liability Insurance Company of NC. I did accept and began a wonderful tenure on the LML Board, with my term expiring in 2019. I was impressed with the outstanding lawyers on the board including Henry Mitchell, Jack Stevens, Tony Hornthal, John Raper, Bill Holford, Doris Bray, Glenn Hardymon, Eric Michaux, and Jimmy Ervin. Others who later served included Sharon Parker, Kenneth McCallister, and many other outstanding lawyers.

Some highlights include my serving as president of the UNC Law Alumni Board from

1992-1993 and being a recipient of the Outstanding Legislator Award by the NC Bar Association on April 10, 1987. During my 50 years as an attorney, I have so enjoyed the interaction with my clients, and in recent years have often represented fourth generation clients as I primarily practice in the area of estate planning, probate, and real estate closings. In appreciation of the wonderful support I have received from the Tabor City community, Columbus County, and Southeastern North Carolina, I have volunteered to serve more organizations than I can even count. The practice of law has been a very fulfilling experience, which I continue to enjoy as I appreciate the interaction with other lawyers, and with members of Wright, Worley, Pope, Ekster & Moss, PLLC. We serve the area with offices in Tabor City, Whiteville, an Supply, and North Myrtle Beach.

Andrea Miller Williamson, who helps with real estate, has worked with me for 25 years, Dee Stanley, who helps with estates, has helped me for 23 years, and Suzette Leonard, who helps with estates and real estate, has worked with me for 29 years. Christopher Collins Russell, who passed the bar on August 28, 2014, enjoys the same practice areas as do and has been of great aid.



NORTH CAROLINA  
STATE BAR

## Late Essays

The following essays were received after the 50 year luncheon took place.

### Donald W. Grimes

After graduating from UNC in 1967 with a BA degree in political science, I worked on a publication staff at the Education Improvement Program, an anti-poverty program at Duke. Having married my high school sweetheart and life counselor during my senior year, she advised me to go to law school, which I had never considered. Fortunately, UNC saw fit to admit me at the last minute and I managed to graduate and pass the bar exam without delay or interruption, i.e., the draft. Had it not been for very rewarding summer internship experiences at the Duke Center on Law and Poverty and the Durham Legal Aid Clinic, my future as a lawyer might have been in doubt.

My legal career progressed through essentially three distinct phases: criminal defense, criminal prosecution, and general practice.

After spending my first year as a partner of the late Hon. George R. Greene in, to the best of my knowledge, Raleigh's only integrated law firm, I joined my classmate and lifelong friend Kenneth Glusman as an assistant public defender in Fayetteville, which I thoroughly enjoyed despite the grueling caseloads. My wife Laura taught elementary school and performed psychological and cognitive assessments while we were there, but we decided to return to Wake County so she could pursue a Ph.D. in neurophysiology, which she completed at NC State.

In Raleigh I joined the staff of the Attorney General's Office as director of the Judges and District Attorneys Advisory Unit and also prosecuted criminal cases referred by district attorneys who had actual or potential conflicts of interest where the accused

was usually a law enforcement officer or state or local politician. Despite my conscientious efforts, all were acquitted.

In 1978 I was asked by the attorney general to set up and direct a new, federally funded Medicaid (provider) Fraud Control Unit, which I gratefully agreed to do. The initial staff included two auditors, two investigators, and me as director/prosecutor. As the unit's work progressed and more and more medical providers were convicted and ordered to reimburse the Medicaid program and/or serve active sentences, the professional staff eventually grew to 13 during my five-year tenure.

On my 40th birthday I resigned from state government and entered private practice in Cary in hopes of improving my and my family's financial well-being. Cary was experiencing dynamic growth at the time and, having grown up there, it seemed the ideal place for me to hang out a shingle. My practice was initially a smorgasbord of cases, but eventually settled primarily on real property and business purchases and sales, wills, estates, and a smattering of domestic relations and traffic violations. In 1993 my wife decided to exit the scientific world and join me as my office manager and plenipotentiary. She had a way of getting and keeping my attention, which resulted in a much more focused and successful enterprise. We closed the office in July 2016 and are trying to enjoy the fruits of our labor.

### Norwood Shelton Jones

From the tobacco fields in Johnston County, from the Jones family farm near Clayton, with my wife, Judy Wall Jones, from the Wall family farm in Archer Lodge, we made our move to Houston, Texas, to work in the tax department of Price Waterhouse in 1971. Our new Texas friends were quickly acquired and are now our "old friends" to

this day. We met wonderful people through our church and through my work at Price Waterhouse and later at the law firm of Anderson, Brown, Orn & Jones, now known as Jones, Gillaspia & Loyd with offices in Houston and Western North Carolina.

Our travels took us all over Texas, California, Montana, Colorado, Kentucky, Chicago, New York, up and down the east coast, New Orleans, many trips to Norway, England, France, Germany, Peru, and other cities and countries all over the world so long as there were oil, coal, or gas deals to be closed. No matter where we traveled, our new friends wanted to know more about Chapel Hill, the University of North Carolina, the state of North Carolina, and how to get their daughters into UNC soccer.

Judy and I took our family values, our North Carolina values, and our tar heel cookbooks with us and all three served us well. We were fortunate to work with the best CPAs during our years with Price Waterhouse, the best Texas attorneys with Anderson, Brown, Orn & Jones, and the best North Carolina attorneys with Poyner & Spruill, the top tax firm clerking during my two summers of law school and as of counsel during many of my years in Houston.

My primary mentor at Price Waterhouse was a CPA/attorney named Frank Rea. At Poyner & Spruill one of my many mentors included Thomas Norris. Some of my visits to the Poyner Spruill office overlapped with Governor Jim Hunt. I remember asking how he liked to be addressed and the answer was "The Governor." My primary mentor at Anderson, Brown, Orn & Jones was an excellent oil & gas attorney, Manro T. Oberwetter, who spent many years in New York City with Millbrook Tweed Hadley and McCoy representing Chase Bank and other oil and gas clients.

I enjoy my current practice in Brevard, North Carolina, which I began in 1997. I practice law and

handle legal and tax matters as trained first by my tax professor at UNC, Professor Scott, by my mentors including Nat Townsend, Thomas Norris, Frank Rea, Manro T. Oberwetter, Thomas D. Anderson, Earl A. Brown, and others.

My wife, Judy Wall, has been with me every step of this journey and she is my very best mentor. Our sons Matthew Jones and his Duke-graduate wife, Julie Day, and our granddaughters, Eliette and Audrey, live nearby in Mills River. We see them often. Our son Andrew Wall Jones resides in Houston and works at the firm. We see him often but never enough. What a family!

Many thanks to everyone at the NC State Bar for being so helpful to me over these 50 years and for giving me the opportunity to write this essay.

## Frank A. Longest Jr.

Having been raised in Mount Airy, NC, I was infused with the traits and surrounded with the ideals as depicted in *The Andy Griffith Show*. It was a great time and place to grow up.

The desire and goal to be a lawyer was present from middle school until completing my BS in business from UNC-Chapel Hill. The legal profession along with medicine and the ministry were held in high esteem and were perceived to offer a stable living and opportunities for community service at the time of final decision as to future career.

After completing UNC law school, I took a one-year position as clerk to Judge Walter E. Brock of the NC Court of Appeals. This was an enjoyable learning experience for which I have always been thankful. The opportunity to see lawyers from across the state make oral arguments and represent the client's cases in briefs solidified my decision to practice in NC. It enabled me to turn down an offer to work in DC with the IRS in the court of appeals for taxpayer refunds. I have never looked back.

After the one year clerking, I faced one of the most important decisions of my life. Where to practice? What type of law to commit to for a career? I was fortunate to have a choice to practice with a large law firm in Raleigh or in Charlotte. In lieu of a large firm, I elected to take the track of a general practice in a smaller city with a three man law firm in Burlington, North Carolina. I received input from both Judge Brock and Judge David Britt who each advised that practice in a smaller law firm may be more enjoyable with immediate direct client contact and trial experience. As Judge Brock said, "Being a big fish in a small pond is not a bad thing."

Going to Burlington and joining Sanders, Holt & Spencer in 1972 was a great choice and practice fit. Immediately I was engaged in civil trial work with Curley Sanders in the area of insurance defense, while Clary Holt offered experience in commercial law and business transactions. Mr. Holt assigned a great deal of the responsibility in a "Burlington Industries" case, which we won at the trial level and made precedent on appeal regarding several UCC issues at a time when the law was still in the development stage. Our firm also represented a number of textiles, hosiery, and other local businesses including a manufacturing facility owned by Genesco. Genesco had bought a large quantity of double knit fabrics from a local Burlington knitter which was determined to be defective. I worked as second chair in the trial and spent a great deal of time in trial preparation of a vice-president of production with Genesco. We needed to have him speak the language of "Alamance County" to the jurors. The jury ruled in our client's favor and was not persuaded by the arguments of the large Greensboro law firm.

Subsequently I was appointed guardian ad litem for the minor children in a will interpretation case involving the same family who were the plaintiffs in the Genesco case. Ironically, that representation

resulted in my employment by the principal member of the family in many business legal matters for a period more than 40 years. This client representation led to being involved in radio communications law including numerous transactions involving the selling and buying of radio stations for several years. I was lucky to work with brokers for radio stations located in several states. This practice was curtailed once the large radio powerhouses started buying the smaller stations, including AM stations. During this time our firm was also engaged to perform commercial real estate transactions and property matters related to a large relocation of Bell Labs employees from New Jersey to the Guilford Center. The transfer program required that our firm provide direct client services to the transferees starting with the initial review of the residential contracts through the closings. I obtained keys to the Register of Deeds Office to perform title searches at night. During the process, I worked with a number of relocated families, and due to their loyalty, it led to subsequent legal services such as estate planning and other matters over the years. It was always a pleasure to run into one of those clients in the grocery store and have them introduce me to their companions or family members with "this is my lawyer."

With the curtailment and relocation of a number of local textiles and hosiery operations due to being uncompetitive with foreign producers, plus the reduction in the number of radio clients with the consolidation in the industry, my practice evolved with a major focus on automobile dealerships and representations of dealerships, including the buying and selling of dealerships in North Carolina and Virginia.

My practice over the years was concentrated in business transactions and civil litigation including commercial, estate, and real estate litigation matters. I found all these cases enjoyable without being con-

fined to a specialization. Doing the same type work over and over Grimes' essay will be on the front "cover," was not my cup of tea. Obviously, the general practice and being involved in both trial and office transactional matters was stressful. Such a variety required several hours over and above the normal practice time for most lawyers. The support of a great long-time staff was a blessing. The general practice was challenging and offered a variety of practice matters to aid clients. As my daddy would say, "Variety is the spice of life."

The practice of law in the small pond has offered many rewarding opportunities such as serving as an adjunct professor teaching business law at Elon University and teaching real estate law as a continuing education program for the local community college.

In summary, practicing law in a small pond has been good to me. Not once being bored with coming to work every day, and yet providing satisfying service opportunities to the community and my family. The practice over the years has been challenging, rewarding, and sometimes stressful. However, I still enjoy the practice of law. Being a lawyer has been rewarding. It has been a great challenge to swim in the small pond. I have been truly blessed.