

# A farewell to Friday

## Leaving his mark on UNC

By DENISE MOULTRIE  
Staff Writer

The secret to long-standing success is a group of strong supporters. That's what Bill Friday said. He should know, his life since law school has been one great big success story.

Friday, the recently retired president of the University of North Carolina system, said he was successful because he grew up during the Depression. "I was nine at the start and 20 when it ended. Something as severe as that is likely to influence your life," he said.

Friday said he worked hard through his childhood and into college, first to Wake Forest College on a \$50 academic scholarship, then to North Carolina State College.

When he graduated from State College with a degree in textile engineering, he went to the Navy where, during World War II, he rose to the rank of lieutenant.

Friday said his life's pace has made him miss the childhood most children had. The pressure of work and striving to be better were always factors in his life, he said.

It was through his work, however, that he learned the importance of education.

He graduated from UNC's law school in 1948, but he never intended to practice law. Instead, his contacts led him to be UNC's assistant dean of students under University President Frank Porter Graham.

Gordon Gray, who succeeded Graham, selected Friday to be his assistant. Gray resigned in 1956 and Harris Perks was selected as his substitute. Perks resigned to head the state's Higher Education Board and Friday was selected to be acting president of the Consolidated University of North Carolina. At the same time, the Board of Trustees was considering 140 candidates for the office of president.

As it turned out, the man for the job was already in office. On Oct. 5, 1957, William Clyde Friday made his inaugural speech accepting the position and the responsibility of being president of the UNC system.

Friday said he had not known that he would be selected for the position. "The chairman of the selecting committee said 'No one on the committee thought it would end this way,'" he said.

The three decades of his successful administration was not a task he achieved by himself, Friday said. "The

credit goes to the men and women with whom I've worked. They are very unselfish people," he said. "I got all the headlines and they did all the work."

One example of what people can do when they pull together, he said, is the ranking of the University in national magazines like U.S. News and World Report. "Look at the evaluation of the University. It's to the glory of this place that it's so."

He said eight of the institutions listed in the category of quality education were private, and only two of them were public schools.

The level of respect reached by the University is rightly earned, Friday said. "All of us tend to brag, but we should put more money into programs."

Friday said he hoped that new administrations would be different from his. One element contributing to a university's growth is change, and it may have been a mistake for him to stay as long as he did, he said.

The University is growing rapidly, but the present growth rate may be "getting a little ahead of ourselves," he said. The University has a surplus of office space and overbuilding may cost "the joy of the region." It would be a disadvantage to overcrowd the area to the extent that no one could enjoy it, he said.

Though there are other institutions within the University system, UNC-Chapel Hill is the capstone and will continue in that position, Friday said.

One difficulty faced by a university president is the lack of the ability to see problems as they develop. "There is a lot of misspent energy and time lost," he said. One such incident was the University system's name change from the "Consolidated University of North Carolina" to the "University of North Carolina."

Friday said he had been lucky to have good student leaders when he began his administration. The status of the University is helped by the quality of students, he said. In the first years, people like Charles Kuralt and Richard Jenrette contributed heartily to the University, Friday said.

Differences between today's students and students in the '50s and '60s include the fact that "You're a generation that knows much more about the world than those students did. Things like going to Europe are easy to do," he said.

Today's students are not as spontaneous as earlier students, but tend to be more deliberate in making things

happen, he said.

When students want to bring attention to an issue, they don't always demonstrate, but they find better ways to do it, he said. "They've found that demonstrating doesn't impress anybody," he said.

Communication between students and faculty has suffered because of the mobility of today's society, he said. "Unlike the old days, most students stayed on campus and met faculty and talked with them in their homes." Students are deprived of the advantage of having their faculty readily accessible, he said.

Student-related issues facing Friday included establishing a minimum requirement for freshman athletes. "I don't think a 700 minimum SAT score is too much to ask," he said. "People are losing faith in the system. The point is to be well-administered and try to do what they (students) need."

Friday said he had not limited himself strictly to the administration of students. This year, he is an honorary member of the Class of 1986. "I've got my T-shirt and I'm very proud to be a part of it."

One thing Friday said he would miss about being University president is that there are never two days exactly alike. "When I came to work, I always came with plenty of enthusiasm and at the end of the day I would know that it was worth it," he said.

Pride in an institution that has grown to the size and capability of UNC is difficult to hide, he said. "Anybody would be proud. It's hard to be objective, but if you don't keep yourself ready to absorb all that, you try to discipline your mind."

Pride and power makes a dangerous combination, he said. Some people are tempted to use power as a means to do things for themselves. Friday said it was tempting to use power to gain political clout. "It's been my thought all along that the University has no business in partisan politics, but it should be involved in the greater issues."

Friday said he made mistakes as president, but "It's all a part of growing up. If you didn't test yourself and make mistakes, you wouldn't grow."

He said he would advise busy students to "... take care of yourself. The biggest mistakes you make come when you are mentally and physically tired."

Students should also "... utilize the strength of (their) faculty. They will respond."



John Kennedy and William Friday during University Day, 1961

### Enduring reign

## The presidency in review: the system's ups, downs

By DENISE MOULTRIE  
Staff Writer

When William Clyde Friday was appointed acting president of the Consolidated University of North Carolina, he had no idea he would actually be named the University's president.

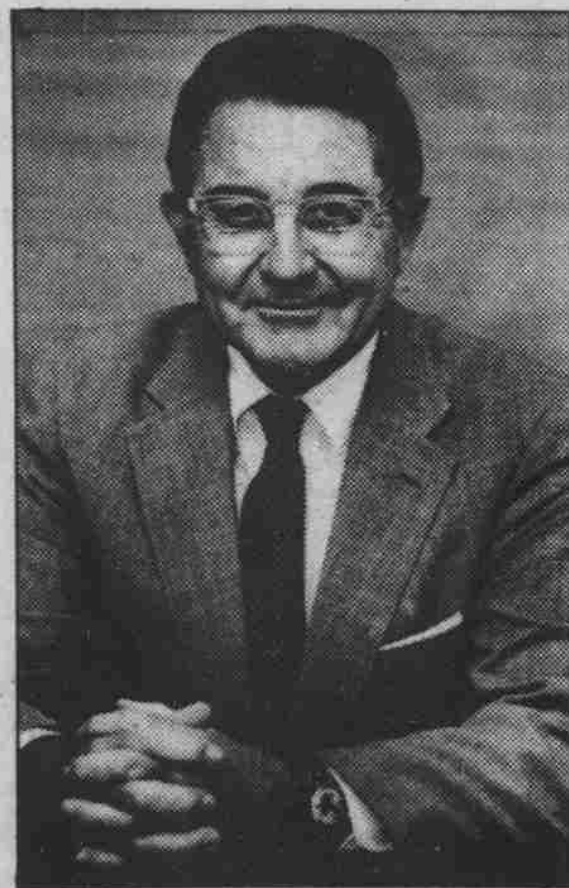
In 1956, a search committee was seeking to fill the vacated office of University President Gordon Gray. They appointed a substitute, Harris Perks, but he resigned to become the Higher Education Board chairman before the search was finished.

The committee felt that Friday, Gray's assistant, would be a capable substitute. Newspaper reports from the time indicate that Friday took command of the job like he was the University president instead of a substitute.

In 1957, the committee decided that the man for the job was already in office, and Friday was named president of the University of North Carolina, which included campuses in Chapel Hill, Greensboro and Raleigh.

In what some considered a political move by Friday, the Consolidated University became the University of North Carolina in 1963. Charlotte College joined the group in 1964. Asheville and Wilmington became part of the University system in 1969.

Renaming the University system made N.C. universities' names similar to California's university system, i.e.,



William C. Friday in 1986

the University of California, Los Angeles.

The collection of 16 constituent colleges was rounded out when, in 1972, the General Assembly included all four-year state institutions in the system. The N.C. School of the Arts also was included.

A trouble spot in Friday's adminis-

trative record came in 1974 when the Department of Health, Education and Welfare approved UNC's desegregation plan and later disputed it. Friday considered the disagreement to be an argument about who controlled students and faculty on individual campuses.

UNC then signed the Consent Decree which made it necessary for UNC to desegregate campuses that were predominantly white or black. The argument continues today.

Growth continued in the University system when, in 1975, East Carolina University established its medical school.

Another positive step in UNC's history came when the National Humanities Center decided to establish itself at Research Triangle Park in 1977. Over 25 other universities were considered for the Center.

Freshmen no longer had to worry about inconsistent admission requirements of the system's 16 campuses when the Board of Governors standardized them in 1984.

That year also saw the dedication of the Microelectronics Center of North Carolina in the Research Triangle Park.

In 1985 the BOG studied the delegation of authority of sports on 15 UNC campuses. Other issues concerning college sports included Proposition 48 which sets a minimum SAT score and grade point average for freshmen college athletes.



William Friday asking children what they want for Christmas, 1971 on his show "North Carolina People"

Photos courtesy of UNC News Bureau

## Ida Friday looks back over 40 years of marriage to William



The Fridays at the 1980 dedication of the Friday Building at UNC-Chapel Hill

By DENISE MOULTRIE  
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When Ida Howell agreed to be Bill Friday's date, she didn't realize the step she was taking.

What began as a blind date resulted in Ida Howell becoming Ida Friday. That marriage has outlasted her husband's 30-year UNC administration.

Mrs. Friday said before marriage, she had not pictured her husband as president of the state's university system.

"He had a degree in textile engineering (from N.C. State). We both came to Chapel Hill as graduate students and had no idea of staying at the University," she said.

She said neither she nor her husband had attempted to work toward any goal of being UNC's president. "We never practiced for it, never

envisioned it. Bill had common sense and drive. I know it was recognized and then it became a case of being in the right place at the right time."

Her role as wife to the university president has not been an easy one, she said. "We hit the ground running every morning — see what needs to be done, and do it."

They both had to grow to fit the presidency, she said. "We were both inadequate. But when things are thrust upon you every distressing situation makes you grow."

Mrs. Friday graduated from Meredith College with a degree in home economics and nutrition. She received a General Education Fund Fellowship when she was a graduate student at UNC where she received her master's degree in public health.

While her husband was in law school she began fulfilling the agree-

ment she made when she accepted the fellowship, she said. She had to stay in North Carolina for two years after receiving her master's degree.

This stipulation posed no particular problem with her husband because he had not yet finished law school. "That's when he accepted a job with Fred Weaver, the dean of men," she said.

"He told Bill that he was going to leave to go to Harvard within two years and that by the time his term was over, my commitment would be over."

With that, Bill Friday's career began to fall into place. That's when she became a president's wife.

Though she's held her position for more than 40 years, she does not attempt to advise other presidents' wives. "I wouldn't dare to give advice to another president's wife, because

each wife is her own person and each wife handles herself differently," she said.

Her husband's loyalty to education, she said, can be seen simply by knowing that if he lacked dedication he wouldn't have kept his position for so long. "He's truly dedicated to young people and he cares a lot about what happens to them," she said.

Though she devoted much of her life to being a wife and mother she has other interests as well, she said. Her love of world history developed through international travel, she said.

"When I go on a trip, I don't go to lounge around. It's not one of those Love Boat type things," she said. "I go to get to know people and history because I know that over the years people have conquered ... and left their marks."

Just like Bill Friday.