

Fordham

from page 1

cerns has always been the student body. He described UNC's students as "exciting, lively and interested in the University and what's going on in the world."

But he understands the dilemma that students face — seeking to serve oneself while trying to serve others. Students want to find the delicate balance between independence and interdependence, he said.

Fordham, impressed by students' ability to find this balance, said students cherish the freedom Americans have, but still have concern for others — even those in far-off lands. "I am encouraged by this generation of students," he added.

And he always tried to be receptive to what students had to tell him. Fordham said he adopted an "open-door policy" to students by encouraging them to come by and talk to him.

Part of this effort to keep the lines of communication open included monthly programs of "Breakfast (or Lunch) with the Chancellor" sponsored by the Carolina Student Fund. Fordham admitted that the title "chancellor" might discourage students from sharing their thoughts, but in general, students have been "pretty straight" with him.

It is somewhat ironic that Fordham, who said he didn't really have any opinions about UNC's administration when he was an undergraduate, should occupy the chancellor's

office 31 years later. When he graduated from UNC in 1949, the administration was "sort of nonexistent," although he did meet then-UNC President Frank Graham once, he said. At that point, he had no ambition to return to UNC as an administrator.

But the Greensboro native did return. After receiving his M.D. from Harvard University in 1951 and completing his residency in Boston, Fordham came back to Chapel Hill as a senior resident assistant at North Carolina Memorial Hospital. He taught and served as associate and assistant dean in the medical school before leaving again in 1969 to become dean of medicine at the Medical College of Georgia, returning again two years later as dean of UNC's School of Medicine. In 1978, he became vice chancellor for health affairs, and moved into the chancellor's office in 1980.

As one who left Chapel Hill and later returned, Fordham wishes other alumni would do the same. He said he encourages alumni to visit the campus and take advantage of the University's resources. There is more to see than athletic events, he said, adding that the Alumni Association is planning programs to bring faculty, alumni and students together.

But this influx of people can cause problems for the small-town atmosphere that Chapel Hill tries to maintain. Fordham said University-



Christopher Fordham

town relations were high on his priority list during his stay in office. The town and the University cannot be separated, he said, because the University is the town's main business. They must continue to try to understand each other's problems and work together to solve them, he said.

Fordham tried to nurture a good relationship with the town, and evidently the Chapel Hill Chamber of Commerce thinks he has succeeded. It annually presents a "Town

and Gown Award" to someone who shows a commitment to civic affairs and who has helped to bridge the gap between University personnel, students and citizens. Fordham was this year's recipient.

When asked about a report saying that UNC is "coasting on its former glory," Fordham quickly pointed out that the report referred only to faculty salaries, not the quality of education.

"UNC has gone uphill," he said.

"No one has said it's going downhill." Fordham said he preferred to characterize UNC as a "soaring eagle with a wounded wing," with the wounded wing being faculty pay. "We are running the risk of coasting if we don't attain the resources we need to make our faculty salaries competitive with the best institutions in the country," he said, adding that UNC "has not gone down one drop" in other areas.

He said the University has continued to increase its research funding, private support and quality of students and faculty. UNC needs to make its salaries comparable with the quality of its education, he said, and he is optimistic that this will happen.

While Fordham supports higher salaries for faculty members, he refused to comment on other policies the UNC should adopt. "That is not for me to say," he said. "The new chancellor should decide the direction the University should take."

Fordham said he was impressed with incoming Chancellor Paul Hardin from Drew University and was "comfortable that he will articulate new directions and continue growth in some of the same

directions."

Although the retiring Fordham said he didn't have any words of wisdom to give Hardin, he said he would offer any advice or information that Hardin might request.

The main objective now is a graceful transition, he said. "I want to help make the change as smooth as possible (and) to be as helpful and as non-intrusive as possible," he said.

Although he will leave his office in South Building on June 30, Fordham is not leaving the University. He plans to take a one-year leave of absence for study and research before returning, once again, as an instructor in the medical school.

Yet neither the town nor the University will forget what Fordham has done for them. Noted for his success at increasing research funding, Fordham will have a new \$11.1 million biology and biotechnology building between Carrington, Mitchell, Wilson and Coker halls named for him.

The Chapel Hill Transportation Board is also considering renaming a portion of U.S. 15-501 for him. Although officials are still unsure about the exact section, they said it is likely to stretch from N.C. 54 through Carrboro and Chapel Hill to the Durham city limits.

When asked how he felt about having a building and a road named for him, Fordham's modesty and devotion to the University once again came through. "Anyone who does anything to honor me . . . is honoring the University," he said, "so I'm grateful."

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