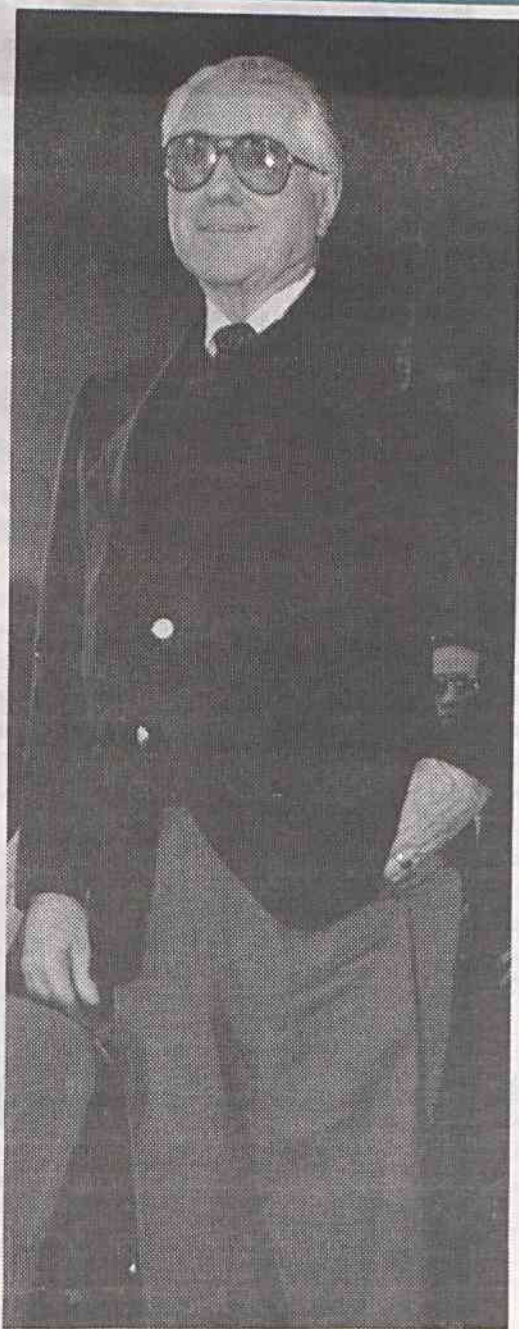


# Today



*A publication for alumni,  
parents and friends of  
the university.*

*Spring 1989*



**William E.  
Sisson**

## William E. Sisson gives \$1 million trust to UNCW

William E. Sisson is a multi-faceted man.

A gentleman of the old school, his manners are exquisite as he welcomes this *UNCW Today* reporter into his home overlooking Banks Channel. His handsome, unlined face and trim figure belie his 79 years.

He is a bold and successful businessman, having turned part ownership of a service station acquired during the Depression into Travelers Oil Company with its numerous service stations in the Southeastern United States.

He is a student of architecture, having graduated from George Washington University in 1932 with a bachelor's degree. While he says that he lacked the creative talent to be a great architect, he tried his hand at designing some service stations and did the preliminary drawings for his home on Harbor Island.

He is an artist, proudly pointing out his fine watercolor completed in 1929 and now hanging prominently over the fireplace.

He is a husband and the father of two daughters and a son.

And he is a sailor, a lifelong lover of the sea, as well as an environmental advocate determined to fight the pollution of our sounds and other coastal waters.

As a result of his environmental interests, Sisson has become a major benefactor to The University of North Carolina at Wilmington. He has established a \$1 million irrevocable charitable remainder trust. The proceeds, available to UNCW upon his death, will support selected research in the marine sciences, provide graduate student support, assist in purchasing specialized research equipment, and support faculty development.

When asked what prompted his contribution to UNCW's marine science research, Sisson explained, "It's a natural for me because I have been interested in the pollution situation here for years. I remember my children, now in their 40s, at one time having to take typhoid shots in order to swim in the sound. So pollution has been with us for some time.

"But I also remember when I first came down here in the early 1940s. You could go over in any of these marshes and in 20 minutes have enough oysters for a roast. Now you can only get oysters by going four or five miles north or south, and even that is being threatened. I hope that the governor of North Carolina will do something for the ecology down here to prevent the development of every bit of the coastal property which creates the runoff and the pollution that we are having," Sisson said.

In announcing forthcoming funds for marine science research, Chancellor William H. Wagoner succinctly summed up Sisson's intent. "Bill Sisson believes the fu-

ture of Southeastern North Carolina is closely tied to the ocean and the sea," said Wagoner. "He has loved the sea all his life, and this investment in marine science research reflects his concern for our marine resources and their proper utilization and development."

Sisson's gift will also enable UNCW marine scientists to better understand and recommend alternatives to correct the stresses placed on the coastal ecosystem.

"With Bill Sisson's \$1 million trust, The University of North Carolina at Wilmington adds another family to its list of leading supporters. This is a major day for the university," Wagoner said. The trust was announced in January, 1989.

A native of Virginia, Sisson entered the business world in 1934 when he started an oil distribution business in Winston-Salem, N.C.

In 1942, Sisson moved to Wilmington to await his Officers Candidate School exams for the Navy. While here, he took a job in the shipyard and in 1945 reactivated Terminal City Oil Company. In 1946, he married Alice B. Moore of Wilmington.

Sisson's business interests include past ownership of Terminal City Oil Company, Ltd.; Terminal City Oil Transport, Inc.; Delta Oil Corporation; Capital Petroleum Corporation, Inc.; Sun Oil Company; Eastern Petroleum Marketing, Inc.; and Travelers Oil Company, Inc.

In 1968, Sisson retired and sold his oil interests to Sun Oil Company yet continued to serve as a management consultant to Sun Oil until 1973. For more than 20 years, he served on the board of directors of Wachovia Bank and Trust Company and Carolina Savings and Loan in Wilmington.

Sisson enjoys hunting, fishing, and boating. He and his wife have three children, Dr. William E. Sisson Jr., a Wilmington chiropractor; Penelope Rushmore, a registered nurse in Marysville, Ohio; and Frances Gibson Sisson, who lives in San Francisco.

Dr. F. Douglas Moore, vice chancellor for university advancement, echoed the chancellor's enthusiasm for Sisson's gift. "This is a very major investment by an individual in the future of UNCW and our marine science program," commented Moore. "This gift ranks among the most significant ever made to Wilmington College and UNCW."

Moore also expressed appreciation to Gene Willetts, investment advisor and owner and president of Philanthropic Services, Inc., of Wilmington, for his assistance in setting up this charitable remainder trust.

"Charitable remainder trusts are becoming quite an attractive method for major gifts from individuals," he noted.

*Mimi Cunningham*