

The sturdiest oak in Elon

Danieley's impact on Elon to be felt for decades

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His time at Elon spanned more than 75 years, during which he expanded the university, enacted social change and touched the hearts of countless members of the community.

In every sense of the word, J. Earl Danieley was a legend of Elon University and the surrounding area.

Danieley, president emeritus, died Tuesday at 92 of various health issues. He'll be remembered at Elon, which he graduated from in 1946, for everything from his smile to his teaching to his presence at basketball games.

"I struggle to find words that are adequate to describe the impact of Dr. Danieley's life on Elon and the tens of thousands of students, faculty, staff and friends who loved him," Elon President Leo Lambert said in a statement announcing Danieley's death. "... It is no exaggeration to say that Earl Danieley was a unique figure in American higher education."

That he was. He took a job teaching chemistry at Elon College upon graduation, and never left.

Between then and his retirement in spring 2016, he taught thousands of students in his chemistry courses, went to lunch with many of them and waved his towel at hundreds of basketball games.

He served as dean for four years, then reluctantly accepted the presidency in 1957. During his 16 years leading Elon, he admitted the first African-American student, grew the faculty and improved the academic standards.

And after stepping down in

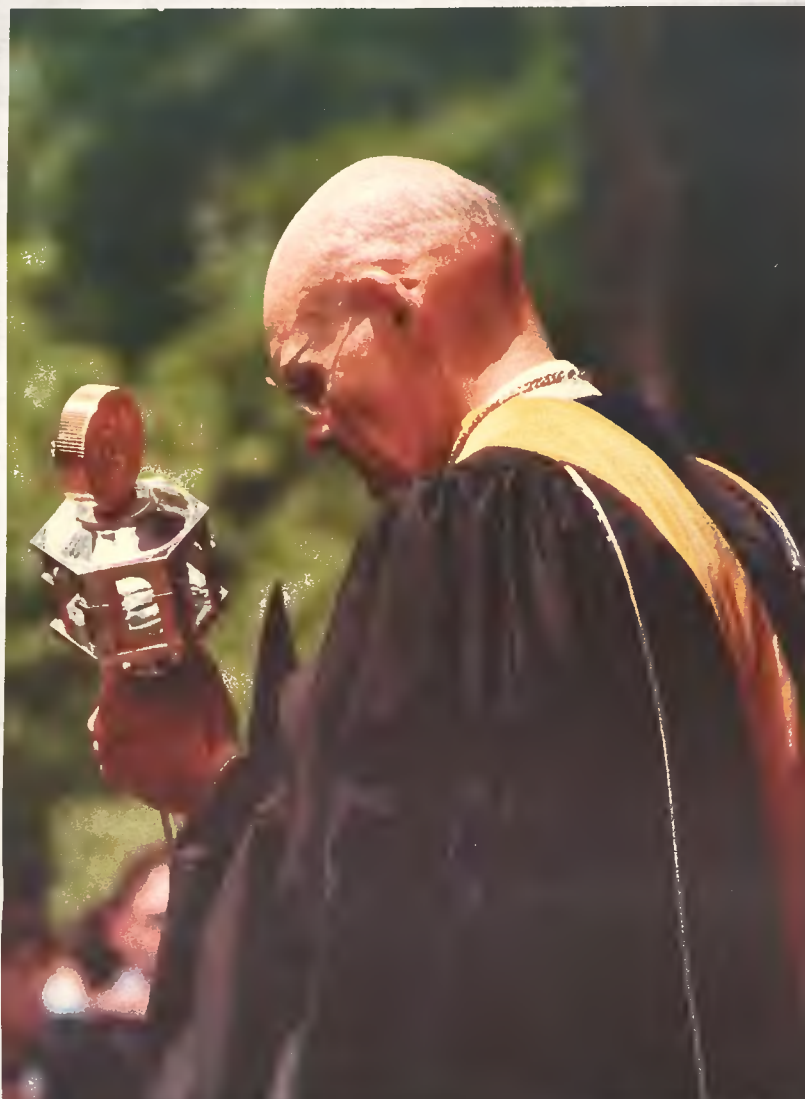
1973 to devote more time to teaching, he maintained his presence as a constant supporter of the university.

When there was backlash over changing the name of the mascot, Danieley was there as sup-

port. When the university held a groundbreaking ceremony for the Schar Center in October, he was there holding a shovel. And he continued to attend men's and women's basketball and volleyball games up through mid-No-

vember.

"Every occasion, he was always for the university advancing," said Smith Jackson, dean of Student Life. "You could always count on him, always having people's back, supporting every-



President Emeritus J. Earl Danieley bows his head in a procession in 1995.

PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

one. He was a wonderful leader. He brought the university through times that distinguished the university to become what it is today, which is a great university."

Danieley is credited with starting the women's athletic program and the Elon College Sports Hall of Fame. He served 12 years on the North Carolina Board of Governors and five years as director of planned giving for Elon.

His impact reached far beyond Elon, visible in the reaction after his death. North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory, Sen. Thom Tillis and the Alamance County Republican Party all released statements commending Danieley's contributions.

His love and spirit for Elon was infectious. He sat in a special chair in the Danieley Neighborhood, named for him, each move-in day to greet new students.

Danieley lived with basketball players at times during his final years, and kept in touch with many of his former students.

"We love Elon here — I think everybody has an affinity for Elon," said men's basketball coach Matt Matheny. "That's one of the great things about this school and this community. I think you could feel that when you were in the presence of Dr. D."

Danieley's legacy is hard to quantify, largely because of how colossal it is. Lambert said Danieley's name "will last around here for a very, very long time to come."

Through his eyes, it's simple, yet powerful.

"I would like them to say, 'That was one honest man, and he did his best,'" Danieley said. "I don't want anything else. I don't need anyone to brag on what I did or anything if they say I did the best I could. That suits me alright."

Paige Pauroso, senior reporter, contributed reporting.

CELEBRATING DANIELEY

FRIDAY, DEC. 2

NOON | NUMEN LUMEN PAVILION

Dr. Danieley's body will lie in state for members of the community to pay their respects.

5-8 P.M.

Visitation hours hosted by the Danieley family.

SATURDAY, DEC. 3

2 P.M. | ALUMNI GYM

A memorial service for Dr. Danieley will be held in Koury Athletic Center, open to the Elon community.

Following the memorial, there will be a College Coffee reception in Moseley Center.