

Friends, family remember Waters' service

BY BRIAN HUDSON
ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY EDITOR

May 27 — More than 200 friends, colleagues and family members of Nick Waters held a memorial service in his honor Saturday, May 22.

Waters, 60, director of Orange County Emergency Management Services, died April 21 after a brief battle with cancer.

During the service, Waters' col-

leagues and friends characterized him as a gruff, though ultimately caring individual.

"Nick delighted in playing the role of 'crusty curmudgeon,'" said Assistant County Manager Rod Visser, who is acting as interim Emergency Director.

"I remained convinced that it was a facade. ... Deep down, he really cared about people."

He said that if Waters was

annoyed, it was only because those around him were not living up to their potential.

Stephen Halkiotis, an Orange County Commissioner, said that Waters' stern attitude led him to be a strong leader.

"Nick had this thing inside of him — a calling, a calling to duty," he said. "Orange County has lost a tireless servant."

"They don't make them like Nick Waters anymore. He will never be replaced."

Several speakers commented on the quality of Waters' contributions to Orange County through his work during the past 15 years.

"Nick forged ahead, he got people involved," Halkiotis said. "Nick was there, fighting for Orange County ... and every other county

in a 50 mile radius."

Halkiotis explained that he respected Waters' devotion to his work and his ability to complete a task.

"Over the years I watched him handle it with great finesse and skill," he said.

"He stood up, but the wind hit him, the snow hit him ... and he rose to the occasion every time."

Halkiotis said that Waters was a force for change as soon as he came to Orange County.

"He was a catalyst, he was the chemistry that brought it together," he said.

Visser also acknowledged Waters' contributions to the community.

"Nick did a lot for Orange County," he said. "He was always proactive ... He was a visionary in

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STEPHEN HALKIOTIS, ORANGE COUNTY COMMISSIONER

his time."

His ability to be a visionary and to think abstractly was one of Waters' strongest traits, said Ron Campbell who works with the Guilford County EMS.

"I admired the man because he always told me 'Ron, don't be afraid to think outside the box. Don't be afraid to do creative thinking,'" Campbell said.

He wasn't afraid to make tough decisions, he explained.

A majority of the service was dedicated to anecdotal stories about Waters that characterized his traits.

Visser spoke of an incident in which his son was sent to the hospital for an emergency. He said Waters was available to offer support.

He said that many words could be used to characterize Waters, but there was one that fit best: heart.

"Nick cared about you even if he didn't let on," Visser said. "This was a man that was truly loved by others."

Halkiotis joked about Waters' hair style, noting that his ponytail made him embody the characteristics of other citizens.

"Because with his long hair and ponytail, he knew he was in Orange County."

Campbell said that despite his stern attitude, Waters always had a sense of humor. "I'm going to miss that laugh ... He opened his doors, welcomed me anytime."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

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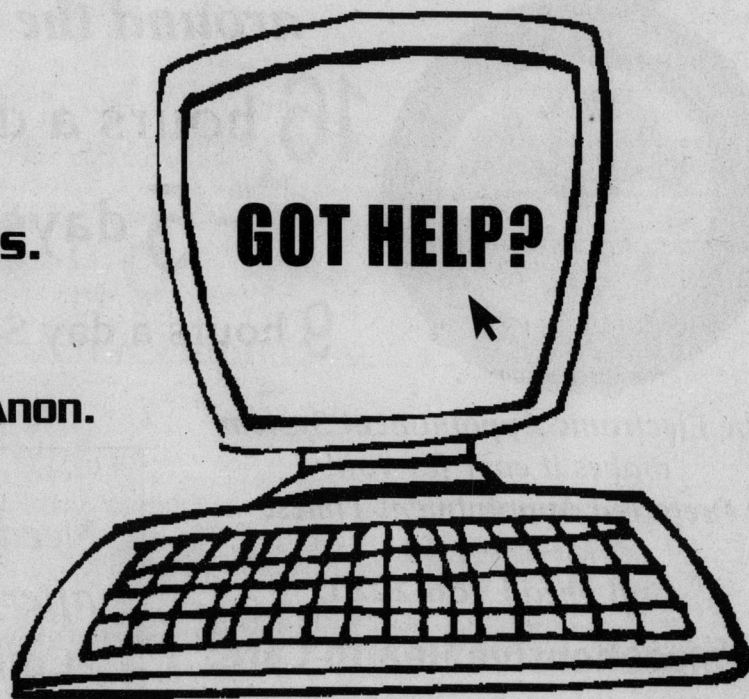
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