A Vision of Selfless Devotion

It is fitting that this issue of Wilkes Magazine pays tribute to Dean George Ralston. He, perhaps more than any other individual, personified the spirit and essence of Wilkes.

George was a huge and powerful spirit in a small package. No one filled a room fuller with optimism, high standards and fun than George did. When you saw and heard George, you received the best of Wilkes. And what he had to say was timeless. He connected positively and directly for a lifetime with the students in every decade he served Wilkes.

My first encounter with George was not long after I accepted the presidency. We were at a reception for alumni in Naples, Fla. He came up to me and said, “Welcome! Feel free to call on me any time to help you. You have become president of a great institution. Now take care of it!” And he meant every word. Never did I ask him to do something that he did not rise to the occasion.

His loss is a great one, but the memories he has left with us are priceless. His spirit was the essence of our mentoring culture: caring deeply about others — helping them when they need it most, no matter what the time of day or night. Alumni tell story after story about George being there at precisely the moment he was needed and doing absolutely the right thing.

If George Ralston had a vision for Wilkes, I believe it would be for us to become an even stronger community that selflessly devotes itself to others in the name of making the world a better place.

George, in your memory, I believe we will. And as we do come together for others, we will thrive in a way that we all hope will make you proud!

Dr. Tim Gilmour
Wilkes University President
On the cover: George Ralston graced the Wilkes campus with his wit, wisdom — and bicycle — for six decades. His legacy continues in the lives of alumni he encountered. They share their recollections of “The Dean” beginning on page 12. PHOTO FROM WILKES ARCHIVES