Joel Lawrence Fleishman  
Doctor of Laws

Joel Fleishman earned three degrees from Carolina (B.A., 1955; J.D., 1959; M.A., 1960) and one from Yale (LL.M., 1960). He was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa and the Order of the Golden Fleece. Although many of Carolina’s alumni have gone on to make extraordinary contributions in a wide variety of venues, few, if any, can match the singular career of Joel Fleishman in all its elements: professor, university administrator, author, scholar, public servant, philanthropist and expert on fine wines. After completing his studies at Yale, Fleishman joined the administration of Governor Terry Sanford as his legal assistant. In that position, he was instrumental in the establishment of the Governor’s School and the North Carolina School of the Arts. He then returned to Yale where he helped establish the Center for the Study of the City, an early leader in encouraging scholarly research on urban problems. In 1971, he rejoined Governor Sanford, then president of Duke University, to found what is now known as the Sanford School of Public Policy. Subsequently, he held a series of senior leadership positions at Duke culminating in his appointment as first senior vice president. In 1993, he became president of The Atlantic Philanthropic Service Company, which provides program staff for one of the world’s largest private charitable foundations. In 2003, Fleishman returned to Duke to provide leadership in numerous initiatives, most recently as faculty chair for the Center for Strategic Philanthropy and Civil Society. Since the 2007 publication of his book “The Foundation: A Great American Secret — How Private Wealth is Changing the World” and the 2011 release of another book, “Give Smart: Philanthropy That Gets Results,” which he co-authored with Thomas J. Tierney, Fleishman has emerged as the leading expert on increasing the impact of philanthropic institutions. Along the way, he shared his love of fine wines by writing a monthly column on wine for Vanity Fair and serving as wine consultant to The 21 Club in New York. He currently serves as chair of the Board of Trustees of the Urban Institute, and formerly was chair of the Visiting Committee of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. Fleishman is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His honors include Carolina’s Distinguished Alumnus Award (1999); Duke University’s highest award, The University Medal (2009); and honorary degrees from Methodist College and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel.

For outstanding accomplishment in the fields of higher education and philanthropy, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is pleased to confer on Joel Lawrence Fleishman the degree of Doctor of Laws honoris causa.