

Whether as Chancellor, as mainstay of the Law School faculty, or as institutional citizen par excellence, William Brantley Aycock's name has for decades in Chapel Hill led all the rest. The sources of this pre-eminence go back to his early days in eastern North Carolina, to his B.S. in Education from our sister institution in Raleigh in 1936, and to his M.A. in History taken here the year after. There followed brief spans as a school teacher in Greensboro, as a federal security administrator, and during World War II as an officer in the United States Army, discharged in 1945 as a heavily decorated lieutenant colonel.

Thus it was that he entered our Law School at the age of thirty, graduating in 1948 first in his class and Editor-in-Chief of the Law Review. He was immediately invited to join the Law School faculty, which he adorned for just under forty years. A signal contribution on the global scale was his work in 1951 as Special Assistant to Dr. Frank Porter Graham on the latter's historic mission to India and Pakistan on behalf of the United Nations, a mission which sought to establish an acceptable political situation in place of further bloodshed.

In 1957, less than a decade after joining the faculty, he was chosen to be Chancellor of this University, a post he held with great distinction for seven years. Under his leadership the University grew by an average of five hundred students a year, and the capacity to increase in excellence while supporting this and later growth is largely due to his efforts. On stepping down from the Chancellorship he returned to teaching, being named a Kenan Professor in 1966, and contributed wise and unobtrusive leadership to the Law School for nearly two decades thereafter. Described as an unsurpassed teacher of the law, he has been praised also for his leadership on behalf of equal rights for women as well as for his service on behalf of international peace.

His legacy, in concrete achievement and in spirit alike, has enriched us all; and on this, by the Trustees' regulations the earliest opportunity after his retirement, we celebrate this legacy by conferring on him the degree of Doctor of Laws.