

ANNE ELLEN QUEEN

Born and reared in Canton, North Carolina, and a paper-cutter in the local paper mill there for ten years, Anne Queen went on to take degrees from Berea College and Yale Divinity School. Arriving at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1956 as Secretary of the YMCA-YWCA (today known as the Campus Y), she began a nineteen-year career during which she befriended thousands of students and became a leader for change on the campus, in the town of Chapel Hill, and throughout the region.

Through the YM-YWCA and in her living room on Mallette Street, she generously welcomed minority students of all kinds, and African-American students in particular, during the early years of racial integration. Floyd B. McKissick, first African-American to receive a law degree from this University and later director of the Congress of Racial Equality, remembers that Anne Queen "just opened her heart and opened her mind and could speak and comfort us. And don't forget the white students who wanted us here were few in number. And the few that were here associated with Anne Queen." Later, under her organization and leadership in the YM-YWCA, the Upward Bound program began on this campus in the summer of 1966. When a strike by cafeteria workers in 1969 occurred, arousing racial tensions, Anne Queen was one of the few leaders trusted by the opposing parties who successfully worked to settle the conflict. Later, during the years of America's involvement in the Vietnam War, she became for students an example of firm but constructive opposition. To female students she advocated their full participation in all aspects of American life by her constant encouragement and by the example and model of her own life.

A woman of modesty and gentleness, Anne Queen made a permanent mark upon the University and upon the state of North Carolina by her generous attention to individuals in all their diversity and by her indefatigable opposition to injustice in all its shapes and guises. A mediator, she drew together the shrill voices of opposition for the sake of civil communication. She understood at a crucial moment in our history the need for change, but she believed, equally passionately, that change must occur in a context of forgiveness, tolerance, and reconciliation.

For two decades Anne Queen asked students, "Now what is your name and where are you from?" -- remembering their replies with remarkable consistency. Today this University proudly speaks her name as one who comes from our own by conferring upon her this honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.