

Donald Williams Curtis

Doctor of Laws

Donald Curtis began his media career at the age of 15, selling radio advertising to local merchants in his hometown of Bessemer City, North Carolina. After his undergraduate days at Carolina, he was a pioneer in cable television, acquiring a number of franchises and building some of North Carolina's first cable systems. In 1967, he sold his interests in cable TV, and built his first radio station. Over the decades that followed, he became a major figure in broadcasting as chair and CEO of the Curtis Media Group, which owns and operates 32 leading radio brands across North Carolina. Some of its notable operations include legendary stations WPTF and WQDR in Raleigh, in addition to stations in Greenville, New Bern, Jacksonville, Winston-Salem, Burlington, Laurinburg, Goldsboro, Boone, Lenoir and Fayetteville. The company also operates the North Carolina News Network, the Triangle Traffic Network, the Southern Farm Network and the ACC Sports Journal. A member of the North Carolina Broadcasters' Hall of Fame, he has served numerous terms on the UNC-TV Board of Trustees.

Curtis served on UNC-Chapel Hill's Board of Trustees and, in 2005, received the William Richardson Davie Award — the board's highest honor recognizing extraordinary service to the University and the state. He chaired the UNC General Alumni Association (2011–2012), served on the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center's Board of Visitors and founded the UNC Children's Hospital Radiothon, which has raised tens of millions of dollars since 1998. He has also served as a member of the UNC Health Care System Board of Directors.

Carolina renamed the auditorium in Memorial Hall as the Beasley-Curtis Auditorium to honor his contribution in renovating this space for the arts. An avid supporter of UNC Athletics, he has not missed a home football game since 1959.

In 2018, the Curtis Foundation announced a transformational gift to the University of more than \$21 million to support the Hussman School of Journalism and Media, the School of Medicine, UNC Hospitals and UNC Athletics. He is a member of the UNC School of Media and Journalism Hall of Fame.