

Eddie Smith Jr.*Doctor of Laws*

Eddie Smith '65 is chairman and CEO of Grady-White Boats Inc., the world's premier builder of outboard-powered sport fishing boats, based in Greenville, North Carolina. The company makes 27 boat models, 18-45 feet in length, which are distributed nationally and internationally through independently owned Grady-White dealerships.

During his 50 years at the helm of Grady-White Boats, which he salvaged from near-bankruptcy, Smith has assumed a leadership role in many industry and charitable organizations, including serving as chairman of the board of directors of the National Marine Manufacturers Association.

But it is Smith's passion for all things Carolina, where the first-generation student played football and graduated with a bachelor of science degree, that really shines. He is a past member of the Executive Committee of the UNC Educational Foundation and of the University's Board of Trustees. The Eddie and Jo Allison Smith Family Foundation, which he created with his late wife, has made philanthropic gifts to the Lineberger Cancer Center, School of Medicine, UNC Health Foundation, Kenan-Flagler Business School, College of Arts & Sciences and other schools and programs.

He and his family have been particularly generous when it comes to Carolina Athletics. Smith considered athletics the "front porch of UNC" for the way sports keeps alumni coming back and connected. He endowed a football scholarship in his father's name in 1987, launching decades of investments in Kenan Stadium expansions and renovations, construction of the Stallings-Evans Sports Medicine Center and the Eddie Smith Field House, also named in honor of Smith's father. Chris Smith Field at Kenan Stadium is named for Smith's son, a 1987 alumnus, who died of ALS in 2021.