

WILLIAM CLYDE FRIDAY

What needs to be said on this occasion about William Clyde Friday is, as far as biographical details go, very little. Born in Dallas, North Carolina, he took an undergraduate degree at North Carolina State (where he was student body president), served in the Navy during World War II, earned a law degree here, and held junior level administrative posts both at this institution and at General Administration. Then, at the age of thirty-six, he started working at the job which occupied him for the next three decades.

That job, of course, was the Presidency of the University of North Carolina. Entering upon a promising but not wholly fulfilled heritage, he completed the articulation of the sixteen-institution Consolidated University which we know. His leadership gained for this system widespread recognition as one of the most successful in the nation -- a success all the more noteworthy because of his steady insistence (which ^{here} many today will thank him for) that tuition fees be kept as low as possible. We are particularly aware of his sensitivity to, and vigilance to preserve, the unique nature of our own Institution. He has also played a prominent national role in matters concerning higher education, serving, for instance, on two presidential task forces on education, and chairing such bodies as the Association of American Universities, the American Council on Education, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. He also took an integral part in the establishment of the Research Triangle Park, and since his official retirement from the University two years ago has accepted new challenges as Executive Director of the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust.

If these biographical facts are quickly stated, what needs to be said on this occasion otherwise can also be brief, because many words will not convey it better than few. Much of what we are now he has made us; much of the excellence we enjoy he has fostered; much of our sense of mission has been focused for us by him. Let something of our gratitude be expressed by the awarding of this degree of Doctor of Laws.