

Charles Justice Doctor of Laws

Charlie “Choo-Choo” Justice, Class of 1950, was the most famous college athlete of his day, a fame that lives still in the hearts and memories of his and subsequent generations of Tar Heels. Like many of his generation of students, Charlie Justice enrolled in Carolina on the G.I. Bill. That paid his bills; his wife, Sarah, attended on his football scholarship. Charlie Justice came to a program that had never been to a bowl game. In four years, he led the team to two Sugar Bowls and a Cotton Bowl. The team used all of his multiple skills: he threw, ran, returned kicks and punted. He held the school record for yardage gained for 44 years. “Choo-Choo” Justice may well be the first college athlete to be honored by his alma mater with an honorary degree. The reason for that distinction is aptly put in these words of Hugh Morton: “No person will ever know the benefits that have come to our University as the result of the loyalty which Charlie Justice kindled in thousands of our alumni. The best thing about Charlie Justice, however, and the reason he deserves this honor, is that he has been a model citizen since college. He has contributed his fame to hundreds of drives and worthy causes and has generally and consistently served as a wholesome example to impressionable youth.”

The University long ago accorded to Charlie Justice the high honor of retiring his jersey number. We now confer on him our highest honor, the degree of Doctor of Laws.