

Remembering Charlie

By Clarajo Macon '67 Pleasants

Of all the unique, creative things which my friend, Charlie Hendricks '40, did, perhaps one of the most impressive was his efforts to force narcissus bulbs to bloom in the wintertime. This project gave him pleasure throughout the year as we visited numerous flea markets and antique stores searching for just the right container for planting blubs and, of course, at just the right price.

During the summer months Charlie walked the beaches, which he so dearly loved, searching for sea shells and small round pebbles to surround the narcissus bulbs in the bowl. In early fall, he would plant two or three of the dry, brown, shriveled bulbs in each container; place them on a table in his already-cluttered dining room; and wait for them to sprout. The waiting was an active period, since it required watering and constant turning as the long slender foliage stretched its way toward the sunshine.

Always, just in time for Christmas, the narcissus bulb would erupt into a gorgeous white lacy work of art. Like a modern Santa Claus, Charlie received and gave immeasurable pleasure as he distributed his very special Christmas gifts.

During the 57 years that Charlie was associated with Guilford College, he forced many things to bloom – the most important of which were numerous young people. As director of admission, he would see in the dry, brown, shriveled exteriors of prospective students a potential that was worth taking a chance on. The admission records show countless examples of students that Charlie admitted as special cases – almost all of whom have become successful, productive adults returning to support Guilford with both their time and resources.

Charlie took a chance on other young



LENNY COHEN

Charlie offers advice to new president Kent Chabotar at the reception following Chabotar's inauguration in April 2003.

people by providing a home for more than 30 students who became known as "Charlie's boys." He wasn't gentle, organized, quiet or subtle, but all profited from the deep-roots philosophy that forced them to bloom into something better than they would have been otherwise.

Narcissus blooms don't last forever; they fade, dry up and return to a brown, shriveled blub. But if a person does as Charlie intended, he will plant

his bulbs after Christmas so that in the springs thereafter, these beautiful narcissus blooms will come again. So it is with the bulbs Charlie gave away, and so it is with the lives that he changed.

Pleasants, who lives in Jamestown, N.C., served on the Alumni Board and Board of Visitors, chaired the President's Club and directed the college's sesquicentennial in 1987.

Charlie Hendricks, a college employee for more than 50 years who was affectionately known as "Mr. Guilford," died Nov. 20 after a period of declining health. He was 86.

Born May 26, 1918, in Archdale, N.C., he was the son of the late Daniel Jay and Sarah Davis Hendricks. A birthright Quaker, he was a member of Springfield Friends Meeting and attended New Garden Friends Meeting.

Following graduation from Allen Jay High School, he entered Guilford in 1936, left in 1941 during World War II to serve in the Civilian Public Service Camp and returned in 1947 to complete his degree. As a member of the college staff, he held 13 different positions under five presidents. In May 2003, he published his memoirs, *Ask Charlie: The Life and Times of Guilford College Legend Charles C. Hendricks*.

In celebration of his 65th birthday in 1983, the former student center on campus was named Hendricks Hall. On his 75th birthday, an endowed scholarship was established in his name. On Oct. 2 of last year, over Homecoming Weekend, he was honored with a reception by alumni and the Alumni Association named the Distinguished Service Award in his honor.

Hendricks was Guilford's first director of admission and the first president of the Carolinas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.



A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF CHARLIE HENDRICKS

will be held Feb. 25 at 5 p.m. in Dana

Auditorium, with a reception following in Sternberger Auditorium, Founders Hall.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Charles C. Hendricks Scholarship Fund at Guilford College, 5800 W. Friendly Ave., Greensboro, N.C. 27410.

Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters to the editor on topics relevant to the college that are important to you.

When you submit a letter for publication, please sign (unless you are using e-mail or computer fax) and include your address and daytime telephone number. If you are submitting a written letter, please print your name as you wish it to appear. Alumni are asked to indicate year of graduation.

Letters should typically address a single idea and not exceed 150 words. We reserve the right to edit for brevity, grammar and clarity.

The deadline for letters for the summer 2005 issue is March 30.

Send letters by e-mail to rbuckner@guilford.edu, fax to 336-316-2939; or mail to *Guilford College Magazine* Office of College Relations Guilford College 5800 West Friendly Avenue Greensboro, N.C. 27410

The editor, Ty Buckner, is reachable by phone at 336-316-2248.

Correction

In the fall 2004 issue, a story about the Freeman Foundation grant on page 35 misstated the amount of the grant. The correct figure is \$1.7 million.

We regret the error.