

# POPKIN'S PROFESSORSHIP GIFT WILL CONTINUE THE FIGHT AGAINST OBESITY

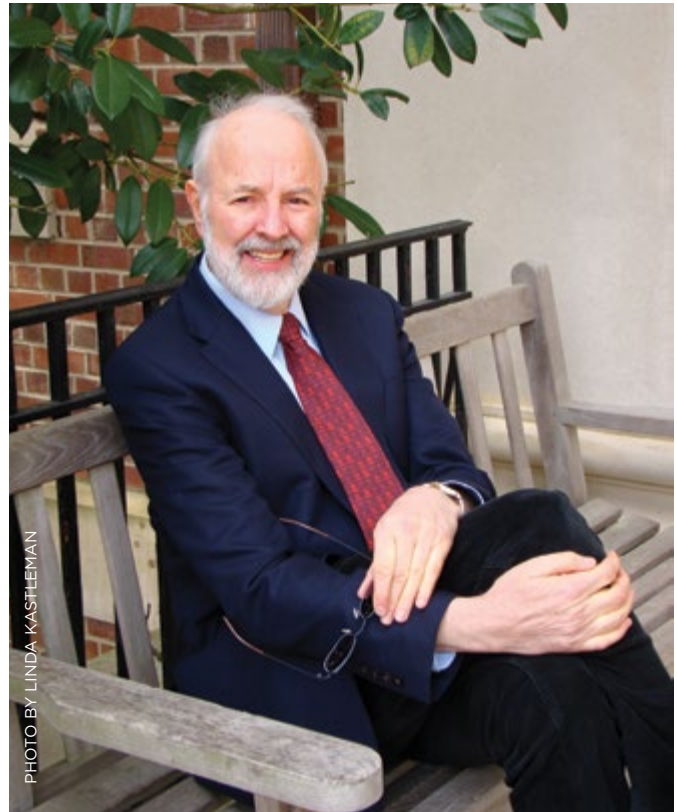
**Where in the world is Barry Popkin?  
He could be anywhere.**

Barry Popkin, PhD, the Gillings School's W.R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor of Global Nutrition, consults or leads studies in China, Russia, the Philippines, Brazil, Mexico and other countries. As a faculty member since 1977, he examines changes in diet, physical activity and body composition in groups of people around the world, leading the charge for policy changes at the state and national levels.

Popkin developed the concept and the term "nutrition transition" to describe shifts in patterns of eating, drinking and moving and subsequent body composition. He and other scholars and policy makers now use this to capture rapid shifts in obesity globally.

In June 2013, he organized a weeklong meeting of global nutrition leaders and members of major foundations and international agencies to address large-scale policy change related to obesity in low- and middle-income countries ([www.bellagioobesity2013.org](http://www.bellagioobesity2013.org)).

Despite his love of travel, one of his favorite places to collaborate is right here at home. Popkin has taken dozens of doctoral students and junior faculty under his wing, helping



Dr. Barry Popkin

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**—PENNY GORDON-LARSEN, PHD**

them grow as researchers and people and become better prepared to be respected junior faculty members.

"Barry has been a terrific mentor," says Carmen Piernas Sanchez, PhD, recent nutrition alumna. "He provided me with all kinds of resources to be successful. He helped me feel confident and not be afraid to take risks."

"He has an amazing ability to mentor colleagues across all levels," adds Penny Gordon-Larsen, PhD, now professor of

nutrition at the School. “He has successfully advised countless faculty members on how to navigate difficult waters as they move up through the ranks.”

Now, Popkin has made more tangible his support for young researchers. This year, he established the first of several Barry Popkin Distinguished Professorships in Public Health Nutrition, an award to support an assistant or associate professor in nutrition at the School.

He intends the award to help advance epidemiological research on determinants, consequences and solutions to U.S. and global dietary, activity and nutrition-related noncommunicable diseases, especially obesity.

“It was the combination of service and research that brought me to UNC’s public health school,” says Popkin, a former community organizer whose doctorate is in economics. “It is the School’s fostering of interdisciplinary collaboration in U.S. and global nutrition and obesity prevention that I hope to see continued with this endowment.”

—Linda Kastleman

## GIVING

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