

*Barbara Hyde, a 1983 UNC alumna, serves as a member of UNC's Board of Trustees, which selected Dr. Dennis Gillings as one of four recipients of this year's William Richardson Davie Award. Hyde is president of the J.R. Hyde III Family Foundation and director of the J.R. Hyde Sr. Foundation of Memphis, Tenn. She also chairs the advisory board for the Institute for the Arts and Humanities in UNC's College of Arts and Sciences.*

*Below is Hyde's introduction of Gillings at the award presentation.*



*Photo by Steve Exum*

In 2007, with one stroke of a pen, Dennis Gillings shifted the paradigm of what it means to teach and practice public health. In doing so, he enabled Carolina to accelerate the delivery of public health solutions in North Carolina and around the world. In fact, news of this electrifying gift was celebrated in a café in Tanzania moments after being released by Carolina.

In honor of the gift, the UNC School of Public Health was renamed the Gillings School of Global Public Health. It has been said, *Perhaps we should have just gone ahead and named it the 'Gillings School of Intergalactic Public Health'* since this is the direction Dennis is headed. Already one of the top three such schools in the nation, the Gillings School remains dedicated to the search for evidence-based solutions to HIV/AIDS, safe drinking water, obesity, communicable diseases, health disparities and more.

Dean Barbara Rimer notes:

*The school shares with Dennis a commitment to solve public health problems in North Carolina and around the world. And we want these solutions to come faster and be more sustainable.*

There is no more powerful example of how our University, supported and spurred by the vision of a generous leader, is moving to fulfill Chancellor Thorp's call to the University to solve the world's most pressing problems.

Dennis' generosity, which benefits other areas at the University as well, springs from his long ties here. A native of Great Britain, he received his bachelor's degree and his Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Exeter, England, and his diploma in mathematical statistics from the University of Cambridge. In 1971, he joined Carolina's faculty as an associate professor of biostatistics. While a professor and director of the School's Biometrics Consulting Laboratory, he consulted with pharmaceutical companies that needed help analyzing information from their clinical trials.

From these beginnings, he founded Quintiles Transnational in 1982. The company is now the largest global provider of clinical trials and commercial marketing services to the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. There is no doubt that Dennis is a transformational leader who is making the world safer through both his business and philanthropic vision.

As chairman and chief executive officer of Quintiles, Dennis still found time for Carolina, serving on the Board of Visitors, the Dean's Advisory Council of the UNC public health school, the Graduate Education Advancement Board, and the Board of Directors of the UNC Health Care System. In 2001, Carolina awarded Dennis an honorary Doctor of Science degree. In 2004, Queen Elizabeth, not to be outdone by a former colony, honored him as Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for services to the pharmaceutical industry. In 2008, he received a Distinguished Service Medal from Carolina's General Alumni Association.

On a personal and perhaps more important level, Dennis is widely praised as an extraordinary teacher and mentor. When Dennis and his colleague Dr. Gary Koch worked together in a rundown trailer parked outside the School of Public Health, they were active teachers, researchers and mentors. A number of undergraduate and graduate students worked in Trailer 39, and many became lifelong friends. Students were as poor as ever during those days, so holiday lunches courtesy of Dennis and Gary at Chez Condoret, a French restaurant in University Square, were a real treat. Dennis and Gary were saying "thank you" to their students, but one of those students realized later that the event offered more. It gave students a hint of how to prepare for their future jobs beyond "the books."

So you see, Dennis always had a remarkable ability to see farther down the road than most people can, and he tried to give his Carolina students an entire package of skills and experiences and to instill in them the "spirit of Carolina," an ability to function at the highest levels of society and to make a difference. Dennis' intent was not just to give his students technical preparation for a career, but to launch them into the world, propelling them to reach their potential.

There are notable parallels between Dennis Gillings and William R. Davie. Both were born in Great Britain and transplanted themselves to America. Both gave birth to audacious visions – one, on a piece of ground under a poplar tree; the other, in a small trailer parked outside Rosenau Hall. And in each case, that man's vision not only shaped his adopted State, but also promises to impact the world.

For his dedication, commitment, loyalty and service to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and beyond, Dennis Gillings receives the William Richardson Davie Award.