

# Delton Atkinson, MPH: Champion of diversity

ALUMNUS DELTON ATKINSON IS SOFT-SPOKEN, BUT HIS WORK IN THE WORLD SPEAKS POWERFULLY AND ELOQUENTLY ABOUT HIS DEDICATION TO PUBLIC HEALTH.

Now deputy director of the Division of Vital Statistics in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, Atkinson earned two Master of Public Health degrees from UNC-Chapel Hill—in biostatistics and health policy and administration (now health policy and management).

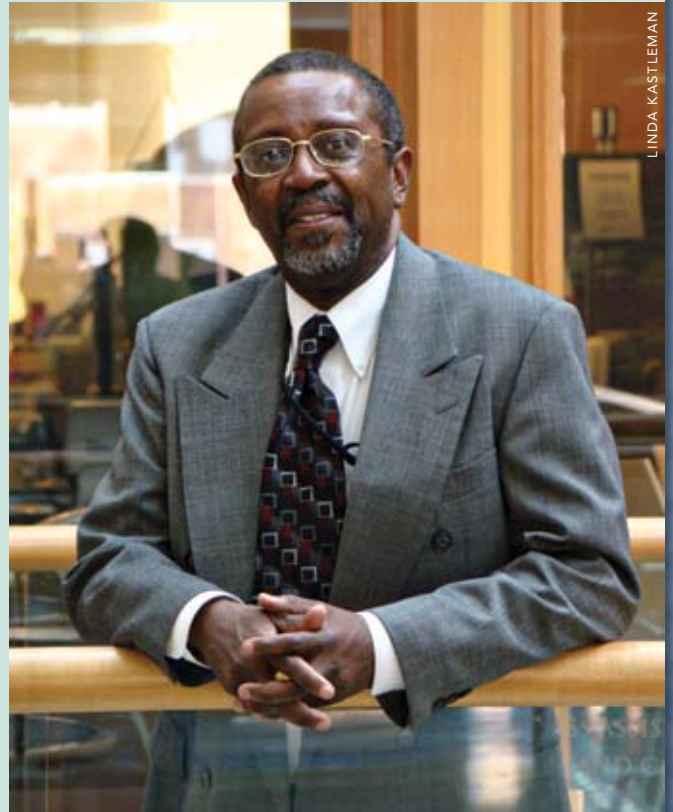
He has taken on a number of roles to enhance the strength of his alma mater, including adjunct faculty member of biostatistics, president and executive board member of the School's alumni association and member of various School committees. He has received several awards for his work and visionary leadership, including ones from the North Carolina and American public health associations.

At CDC, he leads the re-engineering of his division's technology systems to increase the timely availability of health statistics and works with states to improve their statistics systems.

As current chair of the School's Public Health Foundation Board student support committee, one of Atkinson's goals is to increase diversity at the School.

To that end, in January 2010, Atkinson recruited 26 minority alumni and friends to address diversity issues at the School. Their ongoing conversations will explore how to quickly, effectively and fundamentally change the nature of the School so that a more natural diversity among students and faculty and staff members is guaranteed.

"I have had the opportunity to meet and interact with some of the outstanding young men and women in the School who represent our future public health leaders and workers," Atkinson said. "Hearing their stories and their goals made me realize, more than ever, the importance of helping them achieve success and the connectivity of their achievements and our future health care system."



LINDA KASTLEMAN

Atkinson is dedicated to providing opportunities for higher education in public health, especially for students who are underrepresented at the School. Recently, he has established the Delton Atkinson Endowed Scholarship for graduate study at UNC.

"The professional success that I have experienced would not have been possible without the UNC (Gillings) School of (Global) Public Health," Atkinson said. "The School was the foundation of my career, which was made possible only through the solid financial support that I received not once, but twice. Recognizing and understanding this value has meant that 'giving back' to the School has always been one of my goals."

For more information on providing a scholarship opportunity similar to this one, contact Stephen Couch, associate director of development at the School, at (919) 966-0219 or [stephen\\_couch@unc.edu](mailto:stephen_couch@unc.edu). ■

*-Linda Kastleman*