

# Louise and Derek Winstanly:

## *Education is at the heart of progress in public health*



Louise and Derek Winstanly

Derek and Louise Winstanly have lived in the United States for only four years, but already they have made a powerful mark as supporters of public health initiatives in North Carolina. Among other activities, Louise is a member of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the UNC Hospital Ethics Committee, navigating patient protections and other health issues. Both are members of the Acceleration Advisory Committee at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, guiding the progress of funding for innovative public health research.

The South African couple has lived around the world – including the United Kingdom and Japan – and everywhere they travel, Derek, a medical doctor who has been involved in drug research for 25 years and is now an executive at Quintiles Transnational Corp., and Louise, an attorney with a Master of Science degree in bioethics, find ways to make global health local.

“Health is definitely a global issue,” Louise says. “We’ve seen that through the wide and rapid impact of the H1N1 virus. The global effects of such a threat are obvious, but we must recognize what is going on at the local level, too, so that outcomes are guided by strong ethical principles.”

In their native country, Derek worked closely with the Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA), now part of the University of Limpopo, one of the first universities in the country to educate black South Africans as physicians.

He recognized the need for public health education and training to halt the advance of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases in the local communities and the world at large.

“Apartheid had a marginalizing effect on education,” Louise says. “Derek and I see education as a keystone for society – the more educated one is, the more likely he or she is to make a difference.”

That is why the couple has established The Winstanly Scholarship, funding given at the dean’s discretion to a deserving graduate student in public health.

“We identify with Dean Rimer’s vision and with the School’s mission,” Louise says. “We recognize the imminent need for funding the best and most deserving students – which is why we wanted to give – but we also don’t want to be overly prescriptive. The School’s leaders know where student funding is most needed, and we wanted to allow them the freedom to allocate it.”

This fall, the 2009 Winstanly Scholar, Virginia Senkomago of Uganda, will begin the doctoral program in epidemiology at UNC. Virginia, who holds an undergraduate degree in chemistry from Berea College (Berea, Ky.) and a Master of Public Health from Yale, currently is working in South Africa in an HIV/AIDS program sponsored by the private-sector charitable organization, Africare.

The Winstanlys are confident that Virginia’s contributions to public health will be a great return on their investment in her education. ■

– By Linda Kastleman