

MEDALLION OF MERIT CITATION

PRESENTED TO

JAMES PIERCE BAREFIELD

FEBRUARY 16, 2017

Today we honor and celebrate a cherished faculty member whose extraordinary intellectual guidance over four decades has earned him the devotion and gratitude of countless Wake Forest students. There is no better example of the teacher-scholar ideal than professor emeritus of history, James Pierce Barefield, 2017 Medallion of Merit recipient.

Born in Jacksonville, Florida, Professor Barefield spent part of his childhood in Atlanta, finishing high school in Birmingham, Alabama. After he graduated from Rice University, Professor Barefield was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to study in London and completed his doctorate at Johns Hopkins. He joined the history faculty at Wake Forest in 1963 and soon earned a reputation as an engaging and quick-witted lecturer who taught a unique, entertaining and thought-provoking honors seminar.

Professor Barefield's impact was felt not only through his groundbreaking efforts to develop the honors program through signature seminars like "The Ironic View" or "The Comic View," but also for his leadership in the study abroad and merit scholarship programs. From 1973 until his retirement in 2004, Professor Barefield supervised numerous unforgettable semesters abroad at Casa Artom in Venice and London's Worrell House, helping to build the overseas studies program into the nationally recognized program Wake Forest offers today. He also diligently supported merit scholarship opportunities as a mentor and advisor for undergraduate scholarship holders and for students competing for postgraduate scholarships like the Rhodes and the Fulbright.

Throughout his 41-year teaching career at Wake Forest, Professor Barefield was masterful at cultivating the student-teacher relationship, and his abiding concern for his students and their admiration and affection for him developed into numerous lifelong friendships. His natural ability for connecting with students, his wry sense of humor and his infectious love of irony both in literature and in life appealed to his students, who sought out his advice for issues beyond academia.

Although he retired from the faculty in 2004, Professor Barefield continues to serve the University as an expert interviewer for Admissions. Because of his uncanny ability to communicate with young people, his analysis of applicants is flawless, and his innate charm and intellect continue to attract and impress the brightest student prospects.

In gratitude for his four decades as the quintessential professor, his pioneering work with the honors and study abroad programs and his tireless support for students in the merit scholarship program, Wake Forest University confers its highest honor, the Medallion of Merit, upon Professor James Pierce Barefield on this Sixteenth day of February, Two Thousand Seventeen.

NATHAN O. HATCH, PRESIDENT
WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY