

NATHAN ORR HATCH

Today we honor a scholar, educator and servant-leader whose selfless commitment to the people and places he serves has transformed his community through extraordinary vision, bold energy and uncompromised integrity. As Wake Forest University president for 16 years, he embraced opportunity, nurtured talent and modeled the ideals of *Pro Humanitate*, leaving a legacy of institutions and individuals that are better because of him. I am pleased to recognize president emeritus of Wake Forest University, Nathan Orr Hatch, as the 2022 Medallion of Merit recipient.

A native of Columbia, South Carolina, Nathan Hatch earned his undergraduate degree from Wheaton College in Illinois, followed by master's and doctoral degrees from Washington University in St. Louis. He held postdoctoral fellowships at Harvard and Johns Hopkins universities before joining the faculty at the University of Notre Dame in 1975. He was named Notre Dame's provost in 1996, becoming the first Protestant to hold the university's second-highest position. In 2005, Dr. Hatch was appointed the 13th president of Wake Forest University, beginning a 16-year tenure that extended through June 2021.

Dr. Hatch received national acclaim for his book, "The Democratization of American Christianity," and is regularly cited as one of the most influential scholars in the study of the history of religion in America. His insight, focus and pursuit of excellence in scholarship were also hallmarks of his work as an administrator and president. During his tenure, Wake Forest became the first top national university to offer test-optional admissions; expanded its physical and academic scope with Wake Washington, Wake West, Wake Downtown and new programs in biomedical sciences and engineering; successfully completed Wake Will Lead, the largest fundraising effort in the school's history; and focused on character development as a prominent element of Wake Forest's holistic educational model.

Dr. Hatch's strategic vision for Wake Forest included investing in academic, residential and athletics facilities to enhance learning, wellbeing and the student experience, leading to the Office of Wellbeing and the transformation of Reynolds Gym into a wellbeing center. His emphasis on face-to-face engagement resulted in a three-year undergraduate residency requirement and the Call to Conversation program. Wake Forest became a national leader in preparing students for life after graduation through a holistic college-to-career experience. The business school was strengthened when undergraduate and graduate programs were combined, and Dr. Hatch was instrumental in the expansion of Wake Forest's healthcare footprint when the University and Wake Forest University Baptist Health Center, including the Wake Forest University School of Medicine, joined Atrium Health as the academic core of a unified enterprise. This accomplishment enabled access to the University's healthcare providers for millions more patients and the establishment of a second campus of the School of Medicine in Charlotte.

Dr. Hatch's conviction that higher education should nurture character as well as intellect manifested in his founding of the Leadership and Character program. The Magnolia Scholars program for first-generation students, launched in 2009, evidenced his continuing support for access to a premier education for all students regardless of financial standing. He advanced Wake Forest's diversity, inclusion and equity efforts and called for the creation of the President's Commission on Race, Equity and Community. In 2020, he delivered an institutional apology for the University's participation in slavery.

Dr. Hatch served on numerous local and regional boards and committees, including as chair of the boards of directors of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, and the NCAA Division I, and as a board member of the American Council of Education. In 2015, Dr. Hatch was inducted into the prestigious Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 2021, he was installed as a member of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest honor for state and community service.

In gratitude for his 16 years of unwavering commitment to scholarship and excellence, for overseeing the bold, forward-thinking and strategic expansion of Wake Forest's physical space and local and national presence, and for his dedication to the education and personal growth of students grounded in *Pro Humanitate* values, Wake Forest confers its highest honor, the Medallion of Merit, upon President Emeritus Nathan Orr Hatch on this seventeenth day of February, two thousand twenty-two.

Susan R. Wente, President
Wake Forest University