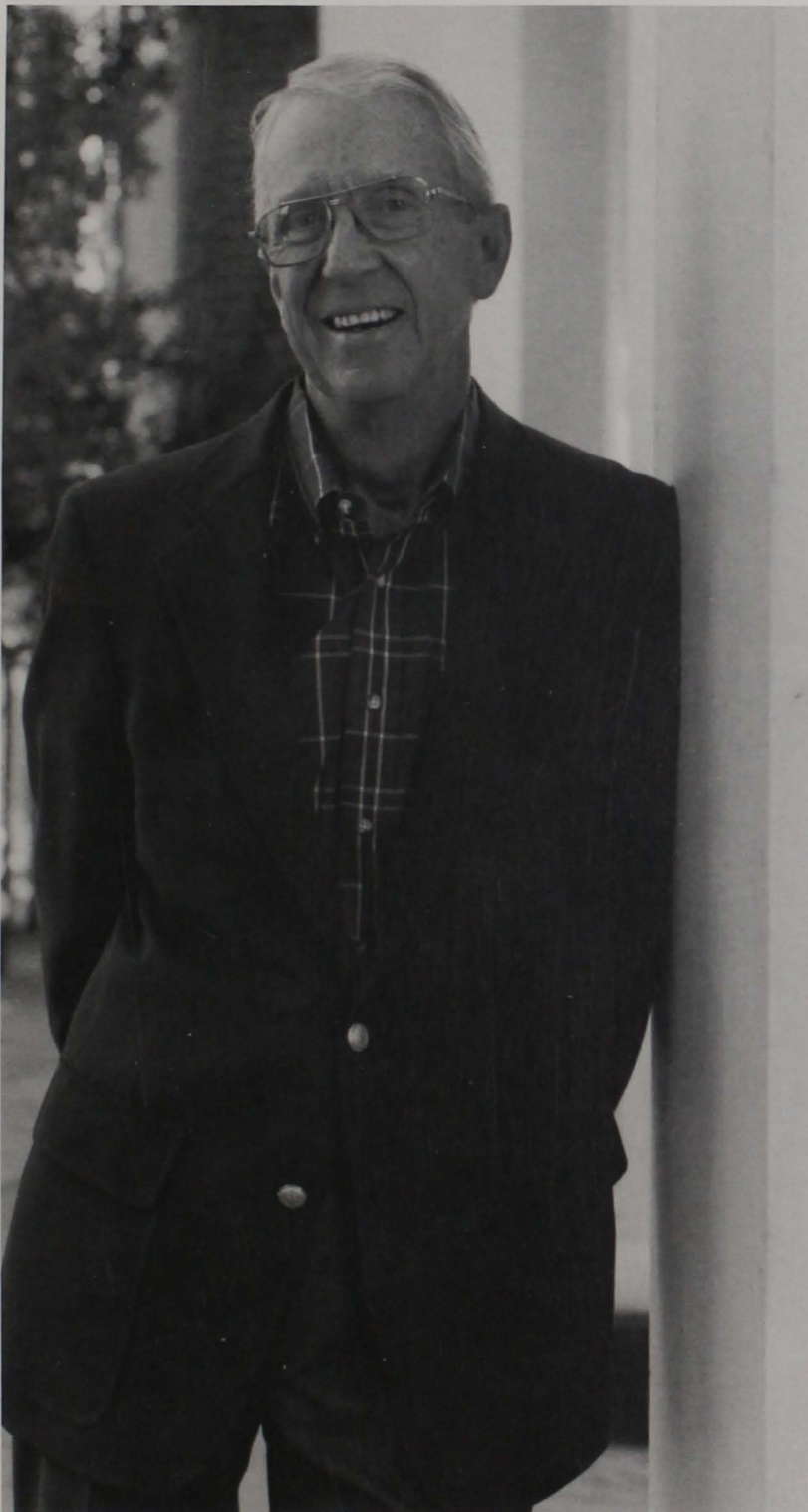

Farewell to a Gentle Man



Mark Reece: More time for golf and grandchildren

Near the end of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* Marc Antony says of "the noblest Roman" Brutus: "His life was gentle." The adjective comes with some surprise — not because Brutus does not deserve the tribute, but because the play has been so turbulent that the word "gentle" has unexpected force and meaning.

I would say of Mark Reece that his life has also been "gentle," and I would use the word as a high and rare compliment. The passions and drives of the 1980s sometimes allow little time for gentleness; but Mark has always placed service above personal gain, duty above rank and title, and others above himself, and he has therefore had the time to be gentle.

With Shirley, with Lisa and Mark Jr. and John and Jordan — and now, sometimes with grandchildren — he has lived quietly and without ostentation on nearby Faculty Drive. To generations of Wake Forest students he has been a counselor and a guardian, using the authority of his office whenever he had to, and even being stern when firmness was called for, but never really masking the kindness that lay behind the official look he had to wear.

Students whom Mark worked with and for in the dean's office, in the fraternities, in the Student Union, in ODK and Mortar Board, on art trips became his allies, his adopted brothers and sisters or sons and daughters; and

students whom Mark had to rebuke or to punish became his friends as they discovered what I think is a central fact about Mark: that he is a man without pretense and without malice. I have known Mark for, I think, forty-five years, and he is as honest, as straightforward, as clean-spirited as he was when I first met him.

Marc Antony's tribute to Brutus, which begins with "His life was gentle," continues, "and the elements/So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up/ And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'" Like "gentle," "man" is a little word, an unexpected word. As Shakespeare uses it, the word "man" suggests not male chauvinism or pride, but, instead, harmony and reconciliation and being at peace with oneself.

Mark Reece is "gentle." He is also a "man." In fact, Mark Reece is the dean of men.

Mark Reece retired last fall after 32 years with the University. He graduated from Wake Forest University in 1949 and returned in 1956 as Associate Director of Alumni Activities. In 1958 he was named Director of Student Affairs and in 1963, Dean of Men. He became Dean of Students in 1984. Provost Edwin Wilson offered this tribute at a dinner honoring Reece's retirement.