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Douglass Hunt

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# FROM REMARKS AT MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR ALBERT COATES

DOUGLASS HUNT†

This transplanted son of Johnston County took everlasting root in the soil of Orange and flourished here in his true native home, The University of North Carolina. He found here a place sufficient for his service to his native state, and he worked with utterly unyielding determination to bestow his life's labor upon the people of North Carolina. From his classroom he moved and shook the State; he transformed the way North Carolinians looked at their public servants at every level of government; and he changed the way those public servants tackled their jobs at every level of government. It is fair to say that, in the long reaches of the University's two hundred-year history, no teacher in her classrooms has more widely and more profoundly affected the daily lives of his fellow citizens.

. . . .

Of all the themes that guided his life, it has seemed to me that one pervaded the rest—a kind of organic and comprehensive view of the relatedness of things, a sense of their unity. As a student Albert heard an admonition on the point from Horace Williams. Here is Albert's account of the experience:

Many an evening I went to his home, on what was at that time the edge of town, to read a speech I had prepared. . . . Many an evening I heard him say: "It won't do Mr. Coates, it won't do." "What is wrong with it?" I would ask. And he would answer, "All you've got is a lot of plank nailed together. What you need is a growing tree."

. . . .

[Later,] Albert, with his exposure to E. K. Graham, accepted that the boundaries of the University should be coterminous with the boundaries of the State. To make government effective, one must infuse education into the governors as well as into the governed. He envisioned the Institute of Government—part of the University coterminous with the borders of the State—as supplying the living sap of education to the trunk, limbs, twigs, and leaves of the tree of government. Under the benign shade of such a tree the people of North Carolina might find shelter and comfort. His was not a modest vision: it was a bold and grand one, and an accurate assessment of what his fellow citizens needed if their government—at every level—was to serve them as it should. So, for Albert, the Institute had unlimited opportunities and an unlimited obligation—unlimited work to do to meet the needs of his fellow citizen. What is astonishing is that, in one lifetime, he brought the Institute from intuition, insight, and dream to institutional reality.

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† Special Assistant to the Chancellor, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; A.B., 1946 University of North Carolina; LL.B., 1951 Yale University School of Law.

