The wings of a man

Founders' Day 1992 was a day when colleagues, faculty, students, alumni, and friends came together to honor the gentle and eloquent man known affectionately to many as "Mr. Wake Forest." Edwin Graves Wilson, scholar, English professor, mentor and for 33 years provost of the University, was the guest speaker at convocation in Wait Chapel. Later in the day Wilson's portrait was unveiled at the dedication of the Z. Smith Reynolds Library wing which now bears his name.

"Ed Wilson is the embodiment of what Wake Forest is all about," said K. Wayne Smith, alumnus and trustee, who spoke at the dedication. "It is said that we make a living by what we get, and we make a life by what we give. Ed Wilson has been very generous." Smith, president and chief executive officer of On-line Computer Library Center, added, "Today we try to honor him, but in truth he honors us by lending his name to this building.

Wilson, now vice president for special projects, enrolled at Wake Forest at age 16 and earned a bachelor of arts degree in 1943. As an undergraduate he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and Omicron Delta Kappa honor societies. He edited the college yearbook, The Hauler. After serving in the Navy during World War II, Wilson earned master's and doctoral degrees at Harvard University. He returned to Wake Forest in 1951 when he joined the faculty of the Department of English. In 1966, Esquire magazine named him one of 33 "super pros" nationwide based on student recommendations. His courses in the Romantic poets continue to be among the most popular on campus.

"For me—"in 1936—coming to Wake Forest, registering, and going to my first classes were, in the immortal words of Humphrey Bogart in Casablanca, the 'start of a beautiful friendship,'" Wilson said at convocation. "Except for three years in the Navy and four years in graduate school, I have lived nowhere else, and the 'beautiful friendship' has endured.

Wilson said the special character of Wake Forest exemplifies a marriage of goodness and intelligence spoken of by former president William Louis Potest nearly 70 years ago "The genius of Wake Forest, I believe, has been created in the particular environment in which we have taught and transmitted intelligence and in which we have exalted man and woman 'thinking,'" he said. To interpret "goodness," Wilson cited the lives and philosophies of Eleanor Roosevelt, Elie Wiesel, Andrei Sakharov, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "If, as is certain, we can never return to that particular believing community over which Samuel Wait and William Louis Potest once presided, we can create and maintain at Wake Forest a larger community which continues to remember Wait and Potest and to proclaim their faith and to honor their legacy of unimpeachable character but also links them in brotherhood and sisterhood to Eleanor Roosevelt and Andrei Sakharov, to Elie Wiesel and Martin Luther King, to John Keats and Emily Dickinson, and to all those men and women whose ideals and powerful imagination we desperately need in age when both intelligence and goodness seem to be so rare and so elusive."

Noting that his own birthday and that of his father are in February, Wilson expressed hope that birth and life might come from this day. "I speak to you this Founders' Day as a man of February," he said. "And from this February celebration too, I hope, will come forth and life—not from me or from any of us who are in the winter of our lives. We must look rather, for intelligence and goodness, to those who are younger, especially to those who are younger..."

Wilson concluded by reading an excerpt from the children's classic, Charlotte's Web, in which Charlotte the spider says to Wilbur the pig: "You have been my friend. That in itself is a tremendous thing. I owe my webs for you because I liked you." He concluded, "To all of you, my family, my colleagues, my students: You have been my friends. That in itself is a tremendous thing. I owe my webs for you because I liked you." Wilson's portrait will hang in the $7.3 million

Ed Wilson greets the youngest guest at the Wilson Wing dedication, Alice Colhoun. Alice is the daughter of Claudia Colhoun (right), Professor Wilson's former assistant.

Student trustee Allison Overhay, left, and library director Rhoda Channer unveil the portrait of Professor Wilson that will hang in the Wilson Wing.

Wilson speech available

To receive a copy of Professor Wilson's 1992 Founders' Day address, "To Honor the Legacy," please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Beth Watson, Office of Public Affairs, Box 7205 Reynolds Station, Wake Forest University, 27598.

To purchase an audio cassette recording of the address, please send a check for $3.25 (payable to Wake Forest University) to Ms. Watson at the address above.
lion Wilson Wing, which offers high-tech research resources to students, professors, and other users. "When I think of wing, I think of taking flight. With this new addition we've left the ground," said Rhoda K. Channing, director of the library, "going beyond traditional print resources to introduce electronic resources."

A computerized catalog, which will eventually replace the traditional card catalog, provides a computerized listing of the library's 1.1 million volumes. The system is also available to those who don't visit the library. Authorized users with modem-equipped personal computers will be able to tap into the catalog from their homes and offices. The catalog is only one of several data bases offered. Those searching journals and other periodicals for research support material can rapidly scan massive listings of articles that may be useful to them.

The Wilson Wing's Information Technology Center will provide a host of new services. Personal computers for word processing, as well as a variety of non-print media such as videotapes, are available to library users. In the bibliographical instruction laboratory, students will take classes to help them navigate a complex information environment. The labs will give students hands-on experience using sophisticated software.

With the opening of the addition, the old library building has been reshuffled. More space has been allocated to rare books and special manuscripts, government documents and the N.C. Baptist Collection. Study space has also increased.

Rhoda Channing displays a framed version of a special bookplate designed to be placed in books purchased by the Edwin G. Wilson Book Fund.

A brass ensemble provided music from high on the atrium walkway.

Professor Wilson (center) with his wife, Emily Herring Wilson (left), and son, Eddie Wilson. The Wilsons also have two daughters, Sally and Julie.
O VERRENCENCE the role of the Z. Smith Reynolds Library in the life of the University, Wake Forest has designated 1992 as the "Year of the Library." The February dedication of the new Edwin G. Wilson Wing (see story on page 2) commenced a host of activities which will include a government documents workshop, a journalism workshop dedicated to the memory of Esquire editor Harold T.P. Hayes '48 and an exhibit of the library's extensive Irish collection.

But while the observance bears witness to the library's place as a repository of testaments to human progress, it also is an occasion to reflect on its mission and to explore new directions in library science. "Navigating the new world of knowledge is the compelling metaphor," says Kenneth A. Zick, vice president for student life and instructional resources.

The core of any library is its collection, and Z. Smith Reynolds Library holds its own, with 1,126,595 volumes, 18,174 current serials and 1,110,064 microform units. Nearly 37,000 volumes, at a per-student expenditure of $1,698, have been added in the past year, and the University is committed to further expansion.

But as Zick observes, a library's collection size is not as important in today's environment. "The ability to serve the needs of students and faculty by accessing other sources—through cooperative interlibrary loans and other means—is probably more important in today's world than the size of the collection," he says.

Already, nationwide computer links such as Internet and Bitnet allow subscribers across the country to share bibliographic files and information. "I've found Internet to be very helpful," says William C. Kerr, a professor of physics at Wake Forest. Kerr can log on to the network from the personal computer in his office, browse news and weather programs worldwide, pull up an article from MIT and send or receive computer files to the government supercomputer in Los Alamos, N.M.

But as impressive as these are, even more profound technological advances are at hand. Experts say the library of the future will feature state-of-the-art electronics, with online systems to replace the old card files. They envision electronic libraries which faculty and students will use 24 hours a day via modems, facsimile machines, personal computers and credit cards without leaving their rooms or offices.

"The electronic library will allow a library like Wake Forest's to satisfy the scholarship needs of a much larger institution," says Zick. "It raises the curtain on a whole new generation of learning." Rhoda K. Channing, director of the library, says the new wing "will be the launching pad for what will ease our transition from a fine library in the traditional form of libraries to a state-of-the-art library that can address future needs through a wide world of information resources."

At the core of this revolution is the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), the country's most widely used computer-based bibliographic data base. OCLC, whose president is alumnus K. Wayne Smith '60, a member of Wake Forest's board of trustees and speaker at the Wilson Wing dedication, contains nearly 25 million bibliographic records—information about books, periodicals, audio recordings, musical scores, audiovisual media, maps, archives, manuscripts and computer files. Librarians use the system for cataloging books and arranging interlibrary loans.

THE RARE BOOKS ROOM at the Z. Smith Reynolds Library is a treasure trove for bibliophiles—those who love to be in the august presence of old books and original manuscripts.

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