

Rotary
Club of
Charlotte



REPORTER

June 19, 2018

PHIL KIRK

The Ten Governors I Have Known



Phil Kirk could have spoken at several more Rotary meetings to cover all of his experience and insights of the ten governors he's known: Dan Moore, Robert Scott, James Holshouser, Jim Hunt (served twice), Jim Martin, Mike Easley, Beverly Purdue, Pat McCrory and Roy Cooper.

In John Tabor's introduction he stated that Phil's lifetime service to North Carolina aligns with Rotary's mission of service starting in 1970, when he became the youngest State Senator in North Carolina history at that time. Phil went on to serve as Chief of Staff for two governors and one U.S. Senator.

For 16 years, he was President/CEO of North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry, which is the State Chamber of Commerce.

He served twice as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the largest department in state government. He is Chairman Emeritus of the State Board of Education, where he served for six years. He also chaired the working committees of North Carolina's two largest successful bond issues including \$2.75B for schools and road, and \$3.1B for the UNC system and community colleges.

Phil started his remarks by welcoming two former governors who were in attendance; Governor Jim Martin and Governor Pat McCrory. He added that just because they were in the audience he wasn't going to change anything about his comments.

Starting with Dan Moore, Phil said he thought he was one of the most underrated governors but had a very interesting primary. He was seen as the moderate in the Democratic party and won a primary runoff with the more progressive Richardson Preyer. Phil said it was actually Dan Moore's wife Jeanelle, that he had the opportunity to work with on projects like Keep North Carolina Beautiful.

Phil said he hit it off well with Moore's successor, Governor Robert Scott, who appointed him to a couple boards saying that he needed to have a "token" Republican. When questioned about having Phil serve, Moore responded by saying "he's so young that he won't have any influence so we may as well have him."

He said Scott was effective at reorganizing government. When he came into office there were 200 department heads that reported directly to the governor. He instituted the cabinet form of government and established the UNC system.

Scott was followed by Jim Holshouser, the first Republican to be elected as North Carolina's chief executive in the 20th century. Phil said Gov. Holshouser gave him the best advice. He said you will be tired and you should keep a diary so you can write down one thing you've done well each day. He said he didn't do it and wished he had.

Holshouser was instrumental in the consolidation of the 16 campuses of The University of North Carolina under the Board of Governors and championed The University system.

At the time, state governors could serve only one term. Then Lt. Governor Jim Hunt was elected into office and Phil was appointed Chairman of the Board of Education where he visited 750 schools across the state. Once Phil was summoned to the governor's office on a Friday and he was too embarrassed to go to his office because he did not have a neck tie on. When asked why he wasn't wearing a tie Phil said only when I meet with important people. He left the governor's reaction to our imagination.

Phil got to know Congressman Jim Martin and the day after he was elected became co-chair, along with his brother Joe Martin, of the transition committee. He described Martin as very intelligent and appreciated his focus on accountability, education and teacher pay. He remembers a time Martin gave him a constituent problem to solve; the Robeson County newspaper hostage situation. I went through all the reasons it couldn't be solved and he told me you have exactly 24 hours to get it done.

While he was direct, Phil said Martin has a sense of humor. When Rufus Edmisten wanted to be governor he said of Martin how can anyone vote for a congressman not born in North Carolina? Martin replied with how impressed he was that his worthy opponent is going all over the state telling the truth that my mom was in Savannah at the time and I wanted to be near her. Rufus also said that he hoped he would never have to eat barbecue again – and the voters took care of it.

In 2000, Mike Easley ran to succeed the term-limited Jim Hunt as the next governor. According to Phil the governor was very difficult to figure out. He didn't appear to enjoy the job as much as his wife Mary, but that he could be effective in small groups and that his administration had the lowest department turnover. Phil's favorite story was the lottery story and that the governor thought it would be good for the state chamber to endorse it. Phil responded with I've asked my executive committee and have been told we're staying out of it. There was a joke around making prostitution legal too and then everything could be regulated.

Then came Beverly Purdue, who Phil said was the best prepared after serving five terms in the N.C. senate and as Lt. Governor for eight years before getting elected governor. Her poll numbers became low as Purdue struggled through a recession and unemployment rates higher than the national average. Her challenges increased by the Republicans' 2010 success in midterm elections. The GOP gained majorities in both chambers of the capitol for the first time in more than a century. She and Republican majority leaders disagreed on most major issues, leaving her with little more than vetoes. A campaign finance investigation and former staff being convicted did not help public perception.

Phil started his remarks about Governor Pat McCrory by saying they share a connection to Catawba College, both serving on the board of advisors and receiving honorary degrees. He describes McCrory as having a great sense of humor but not after the last election. He

did say that he's personable, spontaneous and cannot be programmed by staff. Most people would have thought that having a super Republican majority would make his job easier but it didn't. He said that McCrory got more comfortable in his third and fourth year on the job, and that if maybe had hired a few more people with gray hair he would have been off to a better start.

He quickly added that Governor McCrory gets very little credit for the Connect NC Bonds that have done so much to help teacher pay and education issues. He also shared that Pat once said that Aldona Wos, was the best Secretary of Health and Human Services in the history of our state. As someone who held that position Phil said he called the governor and when he asked the governor, McCrory replied "in this century and you were last century."

Finally, our current Governor Roy Cooper, according to Phil is well qualified on paper and had hopes for bi-partisanship. Given the current climate Phil doesn't have a lot of hope, but he did say that there are issues where there is partisanship and a few include infrastructure, more funding for roads and teacher pay.

In summary, Phil said whether you call them politicians or public servants, they're all human beings and not perfect, but they're all in it for the right reasons. Just ask yourself "Are you willing to run for governor?"

Speaker Write-Up: Kim McMillan; *Head Table:* Mason Alexander, Katie Tyler, John Tabor, Eric Davis; *Invocation:* Jim Rogers; *Visitors & Guest:* Herb Harriss; *Photos:* Bert Voswinkel; *Piano:* Em Syrewicze

CLUB NEWS

A big part of the club's Centennial Celebration in 2016 was the dedication of the public art piece that was installed at BB&T Ballpark. The life size original sculpture of a Charlotte Knights baseball player on a park bench provides a great photo op for everyone as they come into the Ballpark. It is with great pleasure to let you know the second public art piece honoring Bonnie Cone will be unveiled June 29, 2018 at UNCC Center City (320 E. Ninth St.). Chancellor Phil DuBois will join in the celebration and all are invited...4:00 – 5:30 p.m. (*remarks at 4:15 p.m.*) If you are able to attend, please RSVP by this Friday, June 22:

[RSVP](#)

John Tabor recognized Macon Dunnagan, who has climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro 42 times! Six years ago, Macon led the first Rotary team to Kili. In July, he has plans to climb Kilimanjaro four times in just three weeks, which is quite remarkable. Next July, 2019 will be the last Rotary climb. If this is something that would interest you, find a few minutes to talk to John Tabor, Jerry Coughter or Paul Wyche about their experience.



Don Millen forwarded a photo of Lily Fuller, one of Charlotte Rotary's youth exchange students. Lily is enjoying a wonderful experience in France and will be coming back to Charlotte with her Rotary sister later this summer.

MEMBERSHIP

07/01/2017 309
06/19/2018 288
Net Increase: -21
New Members:
Resignations: Rohan Paul

Visitors 10
Club Members 126
Total 136 (50.6%)

Visitors & Guests: Bob McCarter, Cheryl Ford, Kim & Macon Dunnagan, Sherrard Georgius, Stephen Heeseman, Denise Hallett, Terry Ainsworth, Governor Jim Martin, Governor Pat McCrory

BIRTHDAYS (06/28/18 – 07/03/18)

06/29 Glenn Bouley
06/30 Kim Brattain
07/02 Phil Volponi
07/03 Brent Trexler

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES (06/28/18 – 07/03/18)

07/01 Carmen & Chuck Howard
07/01 Lila & Mike Rash

ROTARY ANNIVERSARIES (06/28/18 – 07/03/18)

03 year – Gunda Knese
09 years – George Cochran
22 years – Chase Saunders
23 years – Mac McCarley and Mark Norman

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

06/26 *Jessica Brown and Varian Shrum*, Camp North End
07/03 *President's Installation*
07/10 *Kendall Alley*, Chair, Charlotte Chamber
07/17 *Mike McGuire*, CEO, Grant Thornton Global
07/24 *Linda Hudson*, CEO Cardea Group
07/31 *Dione Nelson*, CEO, Laurel Street Residential (Evergreen)

ROTARY 101 – OBJECT OF ROTARY

Rotary Fellowships consist of members who share a common interest in recreational activities, sports, hobbies, or professions. These groups help expand skills, foster vocational development, and enhance the Rotary experience by exploring interests while developing connections around the world. There is a Fellowship for about anything you could think of including: amateur radio, antique automobiles, beer, bird watching, bowling, canoeing, caravanning, chess, computer users, cooking, convention goers, corporate social responsibility, cricket, cruising, curling, doll lovers, fishing, golf, hiking, horseback riding, jazz.....you name it. For a complete list visit www.rotary.org/fellowships. You'll be amazed at what you find.

Photos from our luncheons and other events can be found on [Flickr](#) [Click here](#)





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