



### **James and Elizabeth Bryan**

James “Jim” Bryan was born to two Presbyterian missionaries in Tokyo, Japan, but he grew up in Alabama. Jim graduated from Davidson College in 1949 and studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Upon completing his training, he returned south to take up a position at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, where he worked in the Polio Surveillance Section.

Elizabeth – or Betsy, as her loved ones know her – was born in Waco, Texas, and attended Austin College where she studied Elementary Education. Jim and Betsy were both active in the Presbyterian Church in their youth and their mutual faith that made their paths cross in Montreat, North Carolina, at a retreat. They were married in 1956.

In the early 1960s, Jim and Betsy traveled to Chapel Hill to visit Jim’s brother where they were introduced to Dr. T. Franklin Williams, a faculty member of the Medical School at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Williams was impressed with Jim and arranged for him to be appointed to the faculty of UNC’s Department of Medicine in 1964. The Bryans took up residence in Chapel Hill and have been active citizens in the community for almost fifty years.

- The Bryans are proudest of their involvement in a various community organizations. Dr. Bryan was active in organizing the Orange-Chatham Comprehensive Health Service, now Piedmont Health. In 1967, he was a lead organizer of the Student Health Action Clinic (SHAC) at UNC, a volunteer medical clinic that assists low-income people in the Chapel Hill and Carrboro community. He was later instrumental in bringing hospice care to North Carolina and a vocal advocate for high quality medical care at nursing homes and retirement communities.

Betsy is equally immersed in community activities. While her children were in school she was an active volunteer in the local public schools. Betsy also donated her time to the Chapel Hill Service League, particularly their Christmas House initiative. She remains dedicated to the preservation of local history through her involvement with the Chapel Hill Preservation Society, the Chapel Hill Historical Society and the former Chapel Hill Museum.

The Bryans also remain involved in the Presbyterian Church. As members of the Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church, they were integral to the formation of the Church of Reconciliation on North Elliott Road in the 1960s. They have since returned to University Presbyterian, after more than twenty years, where they remain as active members of the congregation.

- The Bryans have noticed significant growth in Chapel Hill and Carrboro since their arrival almost fifty years ago, particularly in the evolution of ideas. To this end, they cite the peaceful desegregation of the Chapel Hill Public Schools and the improved relations between the various racial groups who live in the community. Though the Bryans are concerned that the constant growth of the University and the influx of new citizens will make it harder to really “know people” they welcome the rich opportunities new ideas can bring to the community. They believe it is important for new citizens of Chapel Hill and Carrboro to learn from the knowledge and experience of longtime residents, and work to improve both towns.
- It is difficult for Jim and Betsy to select just one favorite memory of Chapel Hill. Instead they recall a collection of happy memories including burgers from Sutton’s Drug Store, visits to Brady’s Restaurant, and evenings at the NC Symphony. Betsy recalls being given on a pie “on credit” at Brady’s, something she feels is the perfect example Chapel Hill’s old “small town” atmosphere.
- Their hope for Chapel Hill and Carrboro is that it will remain a community where people have an understanding of each other. They hope that Town leadership will continue to reach out to all of its diverse constituents to create a united community.