



Lindy Pendergrass

Lindy Pendergrass was born on May 13, 1934, and grew up in Carrboro. He attended Carrboro Elementary School until eighth grade in what is now referred to as the “Old Town Hall building” next to the fire station on West Main Street. Lindy is a graduate of Chapel Hill High School where he played football under Coach Bill Grice. When asked what position he played, Lindy said “back in those days you played both, offense and defense.” Upon graduating, he joined the Marine Corps Reserve. He was honorably discharge following the Korean War and he took various construction jobs. He married Sue Ann Copeland on December 11, 1954. They moved to a house on Severin Street in Chapel Hill, where they live to this day. They have two children, a son who owns the popular Kemp’s Seafood House in Raleigh and a daughter who works as a nurse for the Duke Hospital system. Lindy and Sue are also the proud grandparents of a “redheaded grandson.”

Tired of the traveling for construction jobs, Lindy submitted an application to Chief W.T. Sloan of the Chapel Hill Police Department in 1956, and officially joined the force in 1957 as one of nine officers employed by the Town. During his early years on the Force, Lindy walked an almost daily foot-patrol on Franklin Street where he became a fixture among local students and merchants.

When he left the department in 1982, Lindy Pendergrass' law enforcement career was far from over. He was elected Sheriff of Orange County and sworn into office in the lobby of the police station on December 1, 1982. Almost thirty years later, Lindy still proudly carries the title "Sheriff Pendergrass," keeping him active in law enforcement and crime prevention across Orange County.

- Lindy is proudest of his contributions as a law enforcement officer. Over the years, he has participated in numerous FBI and DEA training workshops. He has used these experiences in shaping a professional and independent Sheriff's office that is well-educated in all facets of law enforcement. He is pleased to note that during his tenure he and his colleagues have come to embody the philosophy: We are here to work with and accommodate the people of Orange County.
- Lindy feels that growth has caused the most significant changes to Chapel Hill and Carrboro during his lifetime. This growth has had both positive and negative effects on the community. He welcomes the various opinions and ideas that new citizens bring to the area, especially when they result in changes that enrich Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Lindy worries, however, that compromise between new and longtime residents could become difficult if change and growth continue too rapidly.
- Lindy fondly recalls the small town nature of Chapel Hill in the 1950s and early 1960s. He and fellow officers often knew everyone by name which made responding to calls that much easier. "You knew everyone," he remembered, "and if you didn't, you certainly knew *of* them." According to Lindy, this "small town atmosphere" began changing in the 1960s and 70s with an increase in drug use among local students and a growing counterculture. Despite the tumultuous nature of those decades – particularly the tense era of the civil rights movement – Lindy proudly reported that under the guidance of Chief W.D. Blake, the Chapel Hill Police Department worked to create an atmosphere of peace and tolerance within the community. As a result of Blake's leadership and the efforts of police officers like Lindy, the interaction between law enforcement and demonstrators was conducted with respect and professionalism.
- When asked what he wished for the future of Chapel Hill and Carrboro, Lindy simply stated, "That we can see kids stay in school." He believes that if the youth of the Towns concentrate on their education they will learn to focus their energies on improving themselves and their communities. He hopes that the young people of Chapel Hill and Carrboro, as well as older generations will put in the hard work necessary to establish a strong future for the community.