



## Giving Matters

# Tenacity, Talent and a Gift for Sharing

**H**erb Pearce has been a part of the University's fabric for more than fifty years. A man who served under five UNH presidents, he was a vice chairman and a longtime member, now emeritus, of the University's Board of Governors. He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree and was the main speaker at UNH's 1980 commencement exercises. He endowed the Adopt a Student Scholarship Fund and the H. Pearce Family and Friends Endowed Scholarship at the University and continues to share his expertise and his success with UNH.

Pearce knows hard work. He moved up quickly at the famed A.C. Gilbert Co., in New Haven, purveyor of the Erector Set and American Flyer trains, during the Depression. (In younger years, Pearce was A.C. Gilbert's paperboy and golf caddy, an invaluable connection.) Although he worked a forty-hour week for just ten dollars, he had an early taste of financial success when he devised a cheaper way to make microscopes. He won five hundred dollars for the idea, a fortune back then.

But job security was fine for other folks. Once he turned forty, Pearce left to work for himself.

"People told me I had rocks in my head," says Pearce, a member of the Board of Governor's Governance and Nominations Committee and a recipient of the UNH President's Medal. "I knew I had a lot of skills, though, and I decided to put those skills to work."

He went into real estate, and H. Pearce Company became one of

the largest and most profitable real-estate companies in Connecticut. In a strange twist of fate, in the mid-1960s, the A.C. Gilbert Company became insolvent. The banks engaged the H. Pearce Company to sell off the physical assets of the company that had first employed Pearce, a situation Pearce still finds full of ironies.

In the early 1980s, after his daughter Barbara joined the company, Herb concentrated on real estate development. His two most prominent projects were the Exit Nine commercial development in North Haven, and Whitney Grove Square, a mixed-use development in New Haven. As testament to his civic leadership and business acumen, a bridge in North Haven was recently named for Pearce and his business partner, Donald Lippincott.

"Although I never went to college, I have three honorary degrees and eight endowed scholarships, and I understand that education is the way to the future," he says.

Pearce's daughter, Diane, a loyal supporter of UNH who received an M.S. in Education from the University in 1999, has dedicated her life to teaching in the New Haven

school system. But Pearce understands that many individuals are unable to pursue higher education because they lack financial resources. "That's something I can do something about," he says. "I want to give my money to somebody who needs it." ♦



Herb Pearce