



THE NORTH CAROLINA CHAMBER  
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## AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE TO

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# RICHARD Y. STEVENS

FORMER NORTH CAROLINA SENATOR

The impact of Richard Stevens's meaningful career is best told through the words of others.

"Until working with Richard after my sophomore year, I was convinced that the only way to make a difference in public policy was to move to Washington, D.C.," says Dana Simpson, attorney at Smith Anderson.

"After a summer of watching Richard [as Wake County Manager and member of the UNC Board of Trustees]...I realized the impact one could have by staying in North Carolina," he added.

Simpson says his story is shared by many who call themselves part of the "Richard Stevens Alumni Network."

Simpson recalls Stevens's NC Senate kickoff event at a Raleigh restaurant in 2002: "Over the course of the evening, I realized that almost half the room was filled with former interns or employees whom Richard helped mentor in our careers."

This network has continued to grow throughout the years, says Simpson, since Stevens mentored many young men and women while in the Senate and continues to do so at Smith Anderson.

Simpson noted Stevens's emphasis on "passing it forward" and giving back to others as one of his defining characteristics—traits that propelled him to run for North Carolina Senate after serving in numerous city government positions, including Wake County Manager—a position he held for 20 years.

"I had always been in public service," says Stevens. "My friends told me they thought I should run, and it grew from there. They asked me 'Why not?' and I couldn't answer that question."

Stevens served five terms in the North Carolina Senate and was budget leader under both Republican and Democratic majorities. He was also was co-chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee in his final two years at the General Assembly.

"I tried every day to work with every member across the aisle," says Stevens, who noted that one of his biggest accomplishments was helping to balance the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 budgets.

"We had the highest tax rate in the Southeast and a three billion dollar deficit. We were able to balance the budget and lower taxes, but it was a team effort," says Stevens. "You don't accomplish anything by yourself in the Senate."

Stevens's ability to make tough budgeting decisions and work with members of both parties are perhaps two reasons he was ranked as the Senate's third most effective member, according to a survey administered by the nonpartisan N.C. Center for Public Policy Research.

And although Stevens could likely have spent many more years on Jones Street, he decided 10 years was long enough. In the true fashion of a public servant, Stevens thought it time to pass the baton to someone else who wanted the opportunity.

“ I HADN'T PLANNED TO STAY FOR FIVE TERMS. AS HIGH AN HONOR IT IS TO SERVE, IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE TRANSITION AND NEW BLOOD [TO MOVE FORWARD]. ”

If the "Richard Stevens Alumni Network" is any indication, the former senator has laid the groundwork for a prosperous North Carolina in the years to come.

"Those of us fortunate enough to call Richard a mentor will forever be grateful for his unwavering loyalty, encouragement and wisdom in helping us succeed in our careers," says Simpson. "His willingness to give back to others and pass it forward to the next generation will be an enduring part of his tremendous public service legacy."