Prior to a Davidson basketball coach named McKillop and Wildcat celebrity Steph Curry, there was Lefty Driesell and a player he recognized as “one of the best captains I ever had … always such a competitor.” That competitiveness, along with leadership ability, keen intellect, dedication to good causes, and a gentle smile and warm heart, all combined into D.G. Martin.

Attending the institution his father served as president, D.G. enhanced Davidson’s reputation by that shared destiny and has held—as both student and alumnus—almost every possible leadership role and volunteer position. But this honor is not about commitment to one institution; it is about leadership defined more broadly.

D.G. once penned these words: “… freedom and opportunity come to us as gifts. We did not earn them. We do not deserve them, and we cannot pay for them.” But he has tried. This ex-Green Beret was a high school teacher before entering Yale Law School and embarking on a career with one of Charlotte’s most prestigious firms. D.G. was on the Board of Governors of the North Carolina Bar Association and was a committee chairman of the American Bar Association. He was Moderator of Mecklenburg Presbytery and Synod of Mid-Atlantic, Elder at Seigle Avenue Presbyterian and held leadership roles at many organizations, including the Charlotte Chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the United Way and the Charlotte Nature Museum. When narrowly defeated in his bids for North Carolina’s United States House of Representatives, D.G. was called again to education, eventually serving as Secretary and then Vice President of Public Affairs for the 16-campus University of North Carolina System. That move to Chapel Hill brought with it the opportunity to join knowledge of North Carolina with love of the written word. He became a newspaper columnist highlighted in more than 40 publications, published author, and host of UNC-TV’s North Carolina Bookwatch. His native state awarded D.G. the Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

Because you have demonstrated in meaningful ways your love of God, of country, of family and of others; because you remain committed to the Old North State; because you manage to convey tenderness as you recommend a book on television or interview an author or moderate a hotly contested debate on the best barbecue or diner in North Carolina; and because your advice and counsel comes with a pure heart and a caring spirit, the Davidson College Alumni Association recognizes you with the Distinguished Alumni Award on the occasion of your 55th reunion, June 9, 2017.