The Harold H. Bate Foundation carries on the vision of a philanthropist who saw the value in East Carolina as a regional leader and community partner. Current board members are (left to right) Gary Baldree, Joyce Hendricks (director), Berleen Burnette, Don Brinkley (president), Benny Mullinix, Bob Mattocks, and Si Seymour. At right is a photo of the late Harold H. Bate.
Eastern North Carolina is a long way from upstate New York, yet it was there that Harold Bate nurtured a love of forestry and higher education that would benefit East Carolina for years to come. After graduating from the School of Forestry at Cornell University in 1930, Bate joined the family lumber business in New York City. During his career, he was involved with the operation of several sawmills and the acquisition of timberlands. Expansion of the business brought him to North Carolina, and he moved to New Bern in 1964.

Bate fell in love with the region he now called home, the hard-working individuals who lived here, and the university with a mission to serve eastern North Carolina. Shortly before his death in 2000, at the age of 93, Bate established the Harold H. Bate Foundation and designated East Carolina as one of its primary beneficiaries. At a recent board of directors meeting, members fondly recalled a very unassuming, humble man with great insight and vision, who was disciplined in both thoughts and actions.

Don Brinkley, ’80, currently serves as president of the Bate Foundation. “Mr. Bate was a strong supporter of East Carolina during his lifetime,” said Brinkley. “It is imperative that we continue to grow this partnership. Together, we can impact tremendously on the lives of people throughout our region.”

Today, the Bate Foundation’s assets are approaching $37 million. Board members are responsible for carrying out the vision of the philanthropist who wanted to enhance education, youth and recreation, and the quality of life for the deserving people of eastern North Carolina.

The Bate Foundation has provided East Carolina numerous scholarships for bright, talented students from Jones, Pamlico, and Craven counties, as well as financial support for construction of the baseball stadium, a camp for overweight teens, and public health scholars.

In 2001, East Carolina named its General Classroom Building, home to the Harriot College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Business, in honor of the lumber executive turned longtime friend and benefactor of the university.