

Students' Mentor and Friend, Bill Small, to Retire March 1

By Michele F. Blevins

A fixture in the School for more than a quarter century, Associate Dean William T. Small, Jr., will retire on March 1 — a move that while exciting for Bill, leaves those whose lives he's touched at Carolina missing him already.

"Dean Small has not only been a leader and an educator to the students, but he has also been our friend," said Rashmi Agarwal, a master's student in the Department of Health Policy and Administration, and chair of the 1999 Minority Health Conference. "His retirement will be a big loss to students."

Now associate dean and senior advisor for Multicultural Affairs, Small began his tenure at the School in November 1971 as coordinator of minority affairs. Then-Dean William Fred Mayes hired Small to help increase minority student enrollment in graduate degree programs. Promoted to assistant dean in 1976 and to associate dean in 1994, Small assumed his current position in 1997.

Over the years, his duties grew to encompass the interests and well being not only of minority students, but of all students. And he served as advisor to the School's two largest student organizations, the Student Union Board and the Minority Student Caucus.

A native of Wilmington, N.C., Small earned a BS in Chemistry in 1965 from North Carolina Central University in Durham. He then enrolled at UNC-CH, where he earned the MSPH in Air and Industrial Hygiene from the Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering in 1969. He spent two years with the State Board of Health in Raleigh as an occupational health chemist in the Epidemiology

Division, Occupational Health Section, before returning to the School.

"Dean Small was instrumental in creating the Minority Health Conference and establishing its place as an integral part of the School of Public Health," said Dr. Michel Ibrahim, professor of Epidemiology and dean from 1982-1997.



Bill Small

The conference, which grew out of a shared commitment by Small and the students to raise awareness of minority health issues, is now in its 21st year. Over the years, he also coordinated the School's commencement activities.

"Dean Small has a passion for making sure that students are taken care of and that all of their needs are met," said Epidemiology master's student Matthew Garvin.

Friend and colleague Dr. Allan Steckler, associate dean for Academic Affairs and Global Health, smiled when reflecting on Small's contributions. It was difficult, Steckler mused, trying to carry on a conversation with Small while walking the halls of Rosenau and McGavran-Greenberg "because there was always someone coming up to him, either students, faculty or staff, wanting to talk to him about one thing or another."

Active in Durham community affairs as a member of the Durham County Health Department Board and several civic organizations, Small was recently named to the Minority Aging Community Research Advisory Committee, an inter-institutional program of UNC-CH and NCCU. He also serves on the Advisory Committee for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Health in Education Initiative, a four-year project funded

by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Small said he hopes retirement brings more time for civic activities and his many hobbies — golf, fishing, hunting and painting. He and his wife, Rosa, plan to enlarge their backyard garden and see more of their two grown daughters, Sheila and Maria.

Of his years in Chapel Hill, Small said, "It's been a very satisfying experience, and I've seen the School do a lot of great things."

It is exciting, he said, to run into alumni who are "out there making a difference in the field of public health. We have one of the greatest schools of public health right here at UNC and I think that is reflected in our students."

Dean William L. Roper said, "I speak for the entire School of Public Health community when I thank Bill for his long record of accomplishments and all that he has given the School. We all wish him the best in this new phase of his career."

Michele F. Blevins, a graduate assistant in External Affairs, is pursuing her MSPH in Environmental Sciences and Engineering, with an interest in science journalism.

Two events are being planned in Small's honor.

The first, a reception, will follow the Minority Health Conference from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on February 19 at the William and Ida Friday Continuing Education Center.

The second, a dinner sponsored by the School, is set for March 3 at The Carolina Club. To purchase dinner tickets, call Lisa Morris in Continuing Education at 919-966-1104.