

SAVING THE OLD SCHOOL: How Scott Gayle And Fellow Attorneys Helped Save The N.C. Governor's School

Scott C. Gayle practices law in Greensboro with Tuggle Duggins, P.A. In his spare time, he likes to take on worthy causes, such as saving the Governor's School.

Gayle will be the first to tell you that he did not accomplish this monumental task by himself. He will also proudly tell you that the Governor's School of North Carolina, a residential summer program established in 1963 for outstanding rising high school seniors from across the state, has survived its 2011 crisis largely due to support from its alumni, but thanks in no small part to a small segment of its alumni: those who went on to become lawyers.

This story began a few years ago when fellow Greensboro attorney and NCBA member Edward Galloway, who also attended Governor's School, asked Gayle if he would be interested in serving on the board of directors of the nonprofit foundation formed to support the school and supplement its state funding (the North Carolina Governor's School Foundation).

"I went to Governor's School in 1968 in math from High Point Central High School," Gayle said. "I have been following it ever since. I made some very good friends there, and five or six of us from that time still get together when we can. One of them was Ed Galloway. Another was Donald Stanford, a lawyer in Chapel Hill.

"We remained friends through college over the years as many alumni of the Governor's School have done, and on occasion we would go back to the alumni weekend that is held every summer. Two years ago I was getting ready to go leave the reunion when they announced they needed people on to fill out the Foundation's board."

Gayle was more than happy to help. He signed on and set about the task of helping his fellow board members divide the \$25,000 or so that the Foundation had raised that year into equal grants for the Governor's School's eastern campus at Meredith College in Raleigh, and its western campus at Salem College in Winston-Salem.



Gayle

"We raised about \$25,000 by June of 2011 and were patting ourselves on the back, when we learned that while everyone was sleeping, the legislature had completely defunded the Governor's School."

From that moment on Gayle's role with the Foundation changed drastically. Instead of helping raise \$25,000 every year to underwrite the cost of special programs and speakers at each campus, Gayle found himself at the forefront of an effort to offset the loss of \$850,000 in state funding — with private funds.

"Unless something was done, the kids at the school in the summer of 2011 would likely be the last group to attend," Gayle said. "Joseph Milner, president of the Foundation, and a professor at Wake Forest, said,

"We are on the board of a foundation whose sole purpose is to support the Governor's School, which has now been defunded. It will not continue to run. What are we going to do?"

"With Joe's encouragement, the board decided to jump in and do whatever we could to save the school," said Gayle. "We really didn't have much debate, because no one felt it (the defunding) should be left unchallenged."

Joe Milner contacted William "Bill" Harrison, chairman of the State Board of Education, which is in charge of the Governor's School, and asked if there was any chance of saving the school for the summer of 2012 with private funding.

The Governor's School is a program of the Department of Public Instruction, which falls under the auspices of the State Board of Education. It does not have a campus. Each year, it leases dorms and classrooms at Salem and Meredith Colleges for about 300 students per campus. Students are selected for their outstanding talents in fields of science, math, social science, language, dance, drama, music or art.

"Bill Harrison asked us how much money our Foundation had on hand," Gayle said, "and we said \$25,000 to \$35,000. Bill said that if we could raise \$100,000 in 30 days that we could talk about it.

"Our little board set out to try to meet the first hurdle in 30 days, but we are not professional fundraisers."

You wouldn't know it by the results.

Board member Jim Hart, who works for software giant SAS in Cary, provided expertise and a critical, though small, database of contact information for Governor's School alumni which he had painstakingly collected over the years for the Governor's School Alumni Association, a sister organization to the Foundation.

"Jim had been collecting email addresses," Gayle said. "We started out with five or six thousand email addresses and kept networking out. Roice Fulton of our board created a wonderful website (www.ncgsfoundation.org) and launched a social networking drive that appealed to the younger alumni. We worked the phone lists and even held small fundraising parties throughout the state and in many major cities throughout the U.S."

"Lawyers from all over the state, all alumni of the Governor's School from over five decades, heard about the effort and offered their time and money to help the cause," said Gayle.

The list of attorneys who volunteered or donated funds includes C. Lee Connor (Burlington), Neil Robbins (Winston-Salem), Charles "Chuck" Revelle (Mooresville), Sally and Bob Cone (Greensboro), Robert "Rob" Tiller (Raleigh), John Russell (Raleigh), John Small (Greensboro) and many others, including too many for Gayle to list from the Raleigh firms of Moore & Van Allen and Parker Poe.

"We rose over \$200,000 in the first 30 days, which was impressive enough to the people in Raleigh that Bill Harrison appointed a special task force of prominent educators to study whether the Governor's School should be kept open and make recommendations to the SBE."

The Task Force, headed by Chris Greene of High Point, conducted several public hearings to determine how much money would be needed and whether a public-private venture could be put together in time for the summer of 2012, which would be the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the school by Governor Terry Sanford, also an attorney.

"We had a hearing in front of the Task Force" Gayle said. "They ultimately recommended that if we could raise \$500,000 by November 2011 that the State Board of Education should keep the school open for 2012. "That was a heckuva challenge!"

It became even more of a challenge for Gayle when he was named chair of the fundraising effort. He immediately enlisted the services of alumnus and professional fundraiser David Winslow of The Winslow Group, Inc. in Winston-Salem.

"David is an expert fundraiser and he came on board at a pittance, a mere fraction of his normal fees, because his heart was in it," Gayle said. "We studied statistics, wrote grants. A lot of companies, banks and foundations stepped up. We raised almost \$300,000 from alumni gifts that averaged about \$150 each. There are 32,000 alumni from the past 50 years of which we could find only about 6,000. We received everything from \$10 student gifts to \$5,000 checks from some of the more established alumni, a lot of whom are attorneys.

"There's no football team, no sports program, and little chance that any of our children or grandchildren will get in. But the

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school is so outstanding and affected so many people's lives, it was worth saving. But for all we knew, we could have been fighting a losing battle, because no one knew what we would be able to do."

What they did was raise \$472,000 by the November deadline. Combined with \$30,000 in state funds held over from the previous year, the goal of \$500,000 was achieved. But that was only enough to keep one campus open.

"We felt the SBE was ready to close the book on a second campus," Gayle said, "but we said that if you give us 60 more days we could raise enough to keep the second campus open."

And, with the help of some key foundation grants and a few more generous donors, they did reach that goal, ultimately providing the state with a grant of \$672,000.

"I don't think many organizations have given that much money to the State of North Carolina," Gayle said. "It was an unusual thing. We had to create the structure in which a private foundation gives a grant to the State of North Carolina. We did that and got SBE's agreement to open both campuses.

"We were pleased with that success, because that kept the school open for its 50th anniversary with about 570 students attending. But it was not all wine and roses, because all our efforts had done was keep the school open for the summer of 2012. There was still no money for the next year, and no money for the future."

In other words, the Governor's School needed to find its way back into the state budget.

"Simultaneously, with my job as fundraiser 98 percent over, our board launched an advocacy campaign" Gayle said. "As a 501(c)(3) we cannot attempt to influence legislation. Our Foundation's attorney, alumnus Jody Joyner, with Moore & Van Allen in Raleigh, stepped up to help and provided hours of free legal services. Jody is a Governor's School alumnus who formed the Foundation 15 years ago, and has provided steady counsel ever since.

"We did not know quite how to run the advocacy campaign, but we found Dana Simpson, an attorney with Smith Anderson, and a top-notch lobbyist in Raleigh. Dana, another alumnus of Governor's School, volunteered his time to advocate for us with the powers that be."

Supported by alumnus Roice Fulton, Simpson orchestrated a successful campaign that effectively placed the Governor's

School's message and mission in front of key legislators.

"Alumni sent letters expressing why the Governor's School was worth saving, explaining that it is a crown jewel of state education," Gayle said. "We conducted a study of 750 alumni to support this claim, showing that of the approximate 32,000 people who have attended Governor's School since 1963, about 70 percent have stayed in this state, and about 40 percent have stayed in or returned to the county from which they hailed."

At the end of the day, the advocacy campaign was also successful, thanks in part to the efforts of Sen. Richard Stevens, who championed the cause of the Governor's School.

"The governor's budget requested \$850,000 for Governor's School, and Rep. Stevens put it in the Republican budget at \$800,000, which still pleased us immensely. We were overjoyed when it made it through the committee process and came out in the final budget at \$800,000, on a recurring basis.

"That is some measure of comfort, because it means that Governor's School will open for 2013 and for the foreseeable future.

In the end, Gayle and his fellow attorneys had played a leading role in a remarkable success story. The doors of the Governor's School remained open and the 50th Anniversary year celebration went off without a hitch on July 14, 2012.

In conjunction with the proceedings, President Jim Hart of the Governor's School Alumni Association presented the Governor Terry Sanford Achievement Award to one of the individuals deemed largely responsible for securing the continuation of the Governor's School.

The recipient was Scott Gayle. **.NCL**

Editor's Note: The NCBA has confirmed that at least 400 past and present members attended the Governor's School of North Carolina over the past 50 years.

2013 N.C. LAWYER LEGISLATORS

Thirty-five lawyer legislators will serve the citizens of North Carolina in the General Assembly during the 2013-14 biennium.

Fifteen attorneys, including seven members of the North Carolina Bar Association, will serve in the Senate. In the House, 20 lawyers including 12 NCBA members will serve.

NCBA members are denoted in boldface. Every effort has been made to confirm the membership status of every legislator listed. Likewise, great care has also been taken to confirm which members of the General Assembly are lawyers.

Please notify the NCBA via rrawlings@ncbar.org regarding any corrections or additions.

N.C. SENATE (in order by district)

Angela R. Bryant (D, District 4/Halifax, Nash, Vance, Warren, Wilson)

Thom Goolsby (R, District 9/New Hanover)

E.S. "Buck" Newton (R, District 11/Johnston, Nash, Wilson)

Dan Blue (D, District 14/Wake)

Josh Stein (D, District 16/Wake)

Tamara Barringer (R, District 17/Wake)

Floyd B. McKissick Jr. (D, District 20/Durham, Granville)

Eleanor Kinnaird (D, District 23/Chatham, Orange)

Phil Berger (R, District 26/Guilford, Rockingham)

Peter Brunstetter (R, District 31/Forsyth, Yadkin)

Fletcher L. Hartsell Jr. (R, District 36/Cabarrus, Union)

Daniel G. Clodfelter (D, District 37/Mecklenburg)

Austin M. Allran (R, District 42/Alexander, Catawba)

N.C. SENATE, continued

Warren Daniel (R, District 46/Burke, Cleveland)

Martin L. Nesbitt Jr. (D, District 49/Buncombe)

N.C. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (in order by district)

Duane Hall (D, District 11/Wake)

Ted Davis Jr. (R, District 19/New Hanover)

N. Leo Daughtry (R, District 26/Johnston)

Larry D. Hall (D, District 29/Durham)

Henry M. Michaux Jr. (D, District 31/Durham)

Nathan Baskerville (D, District 32/Granville, Vance, Warren)

Deborah K. Ross (D, District 34/Wake)

Paul Stam (R, District 37/Wake)

Darren G. Jackson (D, District 39/Wake)

Tom Murry (R, District 41/Wake)

Rick Glazier (D, District 44/Cumberland)

John M. Blust (R, District 62/Guilford)

Hugh Blackwell (R, District 86/Burke)

Rob Bryan (R, District 88/Mecklenburg)

Sarah Stevens (R, District 90/Surry, Wilkes)

Jonathan C. Jordan (R, District 93/Ashe, Watauga)

Jacqueline Michelle Schaffer (R, District 105/Mecklenburg)

Tim Moore (R, District 111/Cleveland)

Nathan Ramsey (R, District 115/Buncombe)

Chuck McGrady (R, District 117/Henderson)

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