



Grace L. Avery

The students who benefit from the Grace L. Avery African-American Scholarship Fund have a remarkable benefactor to thank for her largesse.

Grace Avery grew up as one of eight children on a farm in Pittsboro. She began working at a young age and continued until close to her 90th birthday. A gifted cook and housekeeper, Grace spent her career transforming the houses of her employers into gracious homes. With responsibilities including cooking, cleaning, flower arranging and child care, Grace was an indispensable part of the lives of some of our community's leading families.

"You've got to love your job," says Grace. And she did love working for many leaders of the Triangle's academic community including: William Carmichael, former vice president of finance at UNC, and his wife; former UNC President Bill Friday and his wife, Ida; and Joel Fleishman, a Duke University professor who is the director of the Institute of Policy Sciences and Public Affairs.

Being around students and academics reinforced Grace's strong commitment to education; she believes that education is of the utmost importance. "I didn't get too much (formal) education," she says "but I learned a lot because everywhere I would go I would learn something."

Grace supported the education of her great nieces and nephews. To help others in their quest to learn, she created a scholarship fund with her savings. The fund will also be the beneficiary of her estate. The Triangle Community Foundation is proud to hold Grace L. Avery Scholarship Fund for African-American Students. The fund is designed to inspire future generations of African-American students attending the University of North Carolina or Duke University to achieve success in their lives and their careers. These young women and men will be known as the Grace L. Avery Scholars.

Grace L. Avery is more than a name on a scholarship fund. She is a respected and loved friend with a keen mind, a lively sense of humor and profound practical wisdom. With a legendary green thumb, she tends a yard filled with the flowers, trees and plants that she has nurtured through the years. The yard is often filled with birds, another love of Grace's, which seem to know that they can count on her to supply them with food.

Grace has touched the lives of the many students and friends in her life. With the Grace L. Avery Scholarship Fund for African-American Students, she will touch the lives of many others forever more.