



LEFT: Will Froelich was born in London and was immensely proud of his British heritage. He always cheered for England in the World Cup.

Fund honors a Tar Heel's passion for service and scholarship

By Del Helton

Soon after their son's death, Will Froelich's parents found plans in his room for a special library for underserved children at a Charlotte elementary school.

The "character" library would feature role models who think and dream big. It was also a metaphor for Will and the way he lived his life.

Before he died in a golf cart accident just days before his 18th birthday in August 2009, Will spent hours each week volunteering with Special Olympics and Big Brothers/Big Sisters. A serious student — he once skipped a spring break trip to attend a Thomas Friedman lecture in Charlotte — Will had been admitted to the Honors program in the College of Arts and Sciences at Carolina and was to embark on an adventurous gap year before enrolling in fall 2010.

To celebrate his life and his love for Carolina, Will's parents Molly '83 and Henry Froelich '81 (MBA '84) of Charlotte created the Will Froelich Honors Fellowships. In addition to family gifts, 174 donors, many of whom had experienced firsthand Will's compassion and enthusiasm, made gifts totaling nearly \$300,000.

Each year, the College will award Will Froelich Fellowships to at least three outstanding students who have been accepted to the nationally acclaimed Honors Program but have yet to accept Carolina's offer of admission. Students can use these innovative fellowships with its \$3,000 stipend to study abroad, participate in a program or internship related to public policy, pursue civic engagement or work with a faculty mentor on independent honors research. Three sophomores who would have been Will's Carolina classmates were named the inaugural Will Froelich Fellows in 2010: Lucas Edmond of Durham, N.C.; Trent Stohrer

of New Bern and Elizabeth Whitfield of Cary. Emily Auerbach of Charlotte, and Sutton Alford of Jacksonville, N.C., received fellowships in 2011 and enrolled with the class of 2015.

"Will lived life with great passion, boundless intellectual curiosity and a deep commitment to serving others. The new fellowships that bear his name are meant to nurture those same values," said Jim Leloudis, associate dean for Honors. "They will also help us recruit top students from across the state, and in that way contribute to the vitality of the Carolina community for years to come."

Molly said that her son would be thrilled to know that Will Froelich Fellows were walking around campus.

"He was focused on helping others and having a serious impact on the world. His thought process was on a broader scale, and he had the brains to back it up."

Will's carefully planned gap year — and the fact that he wanted one — said a lot about his personality, Molly said. He planned to start his gap year in Arequipa, Peru, where he would teach English, coach soccer and become more fluent in Spanish. Next, he was to volunteer with an organization to rebuild the Ninth Ward in New Orleans, a city he'd seen only once. For the last six months in his gap year, Will had lined up an internship in Washington, D.C., at *The Hill*, a Capitol Hill publication, satisfying

an intense interest in politics.

The family's Carolina tradition continues as Will's sister Ella entered Carolina this fall. Brother Hal, 12, and his parents look forward to frequent visits to Chapel Hill.

Bryan (MBA '79) and Carolyn Taylor '86 of Charlotte wanted to support their longtime friends, making a \$100,000 gift to the endowment and pledging another \$30,000 in expendable funding to make awards as the endowment builds. Their son Mac, now a sophomore at Carolina, was Will's friend.

Bryan said that the gift was a demonstration of their desire to recognize Will's many achievements, support the university they love and encourage others to support the fund.

"Will was an outstanding and accomplished young man and would have done great things at Carolina," Bryan said. "It seemed quite natural to make the commitment to the fellowships, which will give students the freedom to creatively seek ideas and do research that may enhance the UNC community."

And now that the character library at Rama Road Elementary School is up and running through gifts in Will's memory, students have another hero to celebrate. •

"Will lived life with great passion, boundless intellectual curiosity and a deep commitment to serving others. The new fellowships that bear his name are meant to nurture those same values."

— Jim Leloudis, associate dean for Honors