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**JAMES A. HEAVNER**  
PRESIDENT

January 24, 2003

Mayor Kevin Foy and Council Members  
Town of Chapel Hill  
306 North Columbia Street  
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Dear Mr. Mayor and Council Members

Pursuant to my discussions with Mayor Foy, attached is a proposal for a grant by the Town to support the improvement of the performing arts program of the Carolina Performing Arts Series.

The series is one of the most important non-athletic outreach activities at UNC that connects the town's residents and the University and that requires support from both to be successful.

Soon, Memorial Hall will be a magnificent new facility for presentation of the performing arts. Our goal is to improve the quality of the experience equal to the improvement in the quality of the hall.

The successful \$5 million campaign for the bricks and mortar enjoyed wide local support. Now, there is a window of opportunity to capture that momentum in an upgraded cultural experience for the benefit our community.

Thank you for your consideration of the attached request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Heavner". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a large, light-colored circular mark.

Jim Heavner, Chair  
Memorial Hall Transformation Campaign



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**A PROPOSAL TO  
THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA**

**On behalf of  
MEMORIAL HALL, THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA**

**REQUEST**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill respectfully requests a \$30,000 annual grant for five years from the Town of Chapel Hill to support improvement of the university-community performing arts program associated with Memorial Hall, the university and community's main auditorium.

The project to upgrade programming concurs with the Transformation Campaign, which involves both a major improvement in the facility and increased emphasis on improved programs under the current Carolina Performing Arts Series or and additional programs that may evolve from it.

**SUMMARY**

Memorial Hall, located in the heart of the historic UNC-Chapel Hill campus, has served both the university and civic communities for over seven decades. For many years, Memorial Hall has been outdated and inadequate. Audiences suffered a lobby far too small, cramped seating, inferior acoustics, no air conditioning and woefully few restrooms.

Despite its problems, Memorial Hall was busy from September through May serving the community by producing a performing arts series, usually to sold-out audiences; the North Carolina Symphony; major lectures, civic groups and civic ceremonies. The Hall is the central area for all of the University's ceremonial and cultural functions.

The Hall has been available and will be further available to community activities, thanks to a new year-round facility. These events enrich the intellectual and cultural life of the campus and the community.

A 1998 planning grant from the North Carolina General Assembly provided the first \$1 million for the a long-overdue renovation. The record-breaking Higher Education Bonds approved by the state's voters on November 7, 2000 provided another \$9 million for Memorial Hall.

A total of \$15 million was needed to complete the project. A committee of local volunteers, headed by Jim and Pam Heavner, and assisted by the Transformation Campaign Committee, composed almost fully of local community volunteers, was formed to raise the remaining \$5 million.

The success of that capital campaign is testimony to the broad support of a need for such a facility and its programs. Bunt improving the facility does not automatically improve the programming, which is an equally important goal of the campaign.

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## **HISTORY**

The original Memorial Hall, built in 1885, was dedicated to a former UNC President David Swain and the sons of the University who lost their lives in the Civil War. As construction costs increased, UNC President Kemp Plummer Battle suggested that the building house tablets honoring and memorializing eminent alumni and officers of the University.

The sale of these tablets, paid for by the descendents and friends of those commemorated, raised an additional \$10,000. Thus, the original all-wood Memorial Hall was made possible through a 19<sup>th</sup> century public-private partnership.

In 1929, engineers discovered that rotted beams had created large cracks throughout the building and President Harry W. Chase ordered the building condemned and the trustees appropriated \$200,000 for the current Memorial Hall. More marble plaques were made available to donors to raise the remaining funds necessary to complete the project.

The new building, in the Colonial Revival style, was completed in 1931 with 31 additional marble tablets, for a total of 191. The hard wooden benches from the original memorial were in the building until 1958. The “new” 1959 theater seats remained until the Hall closed in April 2002 in preparation for the renovation.

Over the years, Memorial Hall has served as a community gathering place. Many local residents remember graduation from its stage in the 1960s and 1970s, before Chapel Hill High School’s auditorium was built.

Others remember Mrs. Bounds’ recitals and how hot they were in elaborate costumes under bright lights in sweltering May. Although today, Chapel Hillians enjoy a greater variety of venues for various community events, Memorial Hall historically has been and continues to be inextricably linked with the life of its surrounding community and there is no other venue appropriate to a variety of high quality entertainment, like touring Broadway shows and concerts of kinds.

## **MEMORIAL HALL TRANSFORMATION CAMPAIGN**

The Campaign to transform Memorial Hall into an industry-leading facility is being led by a volunteer committee which has worked tirelessly for nearly two years to raise the \$5 million needed to build the facility.

The partnerships formed by this committee with the media have been instrumental in carrying the message of the Hall's Transformation Campaign. Jennings & Co. of Chapel Hill donated its services to create and design all of the informational and promotional materials for the Campaign. The local newspapers, the Herald Sun and the Chapel Hill News have donated full support to promoting the renovation. All of these services have been donated by the local business community in support of the campaign.

Other sectors of the business community have also been very supportive of the campaign, including an innovative and spontaneous campaign to name rows of seats for special groups. Many restaurants in Chapel Hill are represented in Restaurant Row organized by Scott and Rebecca Maitland of Top of the Hill.

Former Chancellor Paul Hardin has received support from every former living Chancellor or living relatives to name Chancellors Row; UNC President Molly Broad contributed and organized Presidents' Row. To date, over 250 seats have been named at \$5,000 each, a remarkable tribute to the wide support of the campaign.

To date, over 400 seats have been named, each representing a contribution of at latest \$5,000, a remarkable tribute to the wide support of the campaign.

### **RECOGNITION**

In recognition of this gift, the University and The Committee propose with the Town to name a very prominent area in Memorial Hall for the people of Chapel Hill, so that it will be seen for many years by thousands of visitors.

The proposed commemoration might read:

**WEST GRAND STAIR (The Stairway of The Town)**  
For the people of Chapel Hill  
The Town of Chapel Hill

The precise language of the recognition may be determined jointly, with final approval of the University Of North Carolina Board Of Trustees. There will also plaques recognizing this gift on the Main Floor and Balcony Levels of the Hall and on the Donor Wall in the lobby. The citizens of Chapel Hill will be well represented in this facility that has been and will be a great part of our community life.

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## **USE OF THE GIFT**

This gift will be part of a fund to broaden and improve the performing arts programs at Memorial Hall. Even though there will be a dramatically improved facility, the number of seats will not increase—in fact the new auditorium will actually lose a few seats—and ticket prices cannot be instantly raised to cover programs of greater cost.

It the goal of the Transformation Committee to create a fund that will enable organizers to create and book performers and to develop projects that will increase the quality of the cultural experience and contribute to the quality of life downtown and in our community, generally.

In addition to upgrading performances during the fall-to-spring season with broader support, the Committee envisions spring and summer seasonal performing arts workshop programs will bring participants from throughout the region. We believe this will increase the vitality of the campus, community and down town.

The Committee and the University believe that, in creating a higher quality, multi-faceted experience in Memorial Hall, audiences, patrons, participants and corporate donors will be more inclined to higher financial support, as its success breeds further support. The ultimate goal of the Memorial Hall Steering Committee is for our campus and community to be exposed to performances and participation on a level equal with those in the best college communities and campuses anywhere in the United States.

With the support of the Town of Chapel Hill, that vision can become reality.