Dr. Charles E. Ratliff

Dare to be naive. The recipient of the first Hunter Hamilton Love of Teaching award has issued this challenge to countless Davidson students throughout his nearly 50 year career in teaching here. In the words of one student who received this challenge, "I know that I would not be on this life path now, had he not taken time to help me when I needed it." This teacher's teacher reaches out to every student in one of his typically crowded classes. He provides them with insights into how the world works, or should work, that will last a lifetime. Clarifying the complexity and detail of his discipline, he also stimulates and inspires his students with his vision of a better world. His classes are marked by a contagious enthusiasm for his field, an obvious dedication to his students and his college, and service to his community from an Anson County farm to Wall Street, from a village in Pakistan to the World Bank. Using his own experience, he takes his students on daily journeys through the corridors of power and through the alleys of poverty. On these journeys he is rigorous yet fair, demanding yet patient. His class discussions and personal example prompt extraordinary accomplishments and a desire for additional learning. His commitment to teaching is not limited to the classroom. He inspires audiences of church members, civic groups, and national boards with his vision of fairer and more just world. His teaching sojourns in Pakistan have brought a richer and broader perspective to all of us with his commitment to international studies at Davidson. His home has been a haven for foreign students as they adjust to a new culture and a new environment. This exceptional teacher possesses a unique combination of intellect and humility, eloquence and common sense, dignity and compassion. He is truly singular. He inspires his students and his colleagues, indeed all who know him and his works. His mark on this college and its students is indelible. We salute you today, Charles E. Ratliff, Jr. A great teacher and a great human being and we name you the first recipient of the Hunter-Hamilton Love of Teaching Award.