



Institute of Government: Albert, Rich, and Janet

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Fewer and fewer people in the Knapp-Sanders Building ever worked at the Institute of Government. We try to remind people about Albert Coates and the Institute because our history has shaped our values and who we are today. Marsha Lobacz, our wonderful Assistant Librarian, occasionally finds something interesting about our history and passes it along to me. Last week she sent me two things that I want to share.

The first is a mysterious document called "Are We Candidate Conscious or Only Politically Minded" by Grace Evelyn Abbott. The document is a questionnaire created "in the hope that it might be used in North Carolina for all candidates in coming elections." Abbott believed that using the questionnaire might produce "an awakened and more cooperative government. Impartial facts impartially studied should bring results."

The questionnaire contains only eleven questions, including the position desired, educational background, and whether the candidate would support consolidation of counties, reduction of court costs, and "differential laws for women." Not surprisingly, question 10 is my favorite: "Are you a member of the North Carolina Institute of Government? Are you a regular subscriber to their monthly magazine, *Popular Government*? Have you attended any of their conventions or study groups? If so, state when."

Abbot explains the reason for each question. "Are you a member of the North Carolina Institute of Government is just another way of asking if the candidate is up-to-date and interested in modern methods of operating public offices. By being a subscriber to the magazine *Popular Government* the candidate would show he is in touch with new developments as he read and



joined with the men and women who are making North Carolina's Institute of Government an institution to be praised and copied by other states."

The document is undated and so far we have not been able to learn anything about Abbott. Of course I like her notion that candidates for office have a responsibility to be well-informed and that reading our materials is a good way to learn about government. We no longer publish *Popular Government*, but we have lots of other resources that would help first-time candidates and even incumbent public officials. [The wonderful Local Government Board Builder Series created under Vaughn Upshaw's leadership](#) includes a helpful introduction to many issues facing local governing boards. [County and Municipal Government in North Carolina](#) is a comprehensive reference work, and there are many other publications that candidates could find helpful. Abbott's explanation also makes it sound like anyone could become a "member" of the Institute, which is an intriguing idea.



The other document that Marsha passed along is a speech given by Governor Luther Hodges on November 30, 1960 at the dedication of the Knapp Building. According to Hodges, "Albert Coates caught hold of a vision more than thirty years ago and he has never let it go. He dreamed, and by his own unceasing back-breaking efforts, his dreams were formed into substance. They were given life. We see a part of the culminating substance of that dream here in this lovely and useful building." Governor Hodges concluded that "[b]ecause of Coates' dream come true, the administration of public affairs in North Carolina?at all levels?has been lifted up to standards of excellence second to none in the Nation."



Governor Luther Hodges

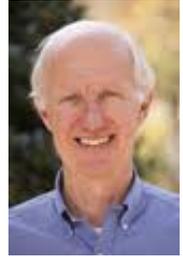
Hodges honored Coates for his vision and for doing the job well. He continued: "I don't mean to say the job is finished. It can never be. Yesterday's and today's work, no matter how well done, cannot suffice for the work which must be done tomorrow and on all future tomorrows."

Governor Hodges was right that the work started by Mr. (and Mrs.) Coates will never be finished, and they would be pleased to know the many ways that all of you are continuing that work.

Over the years many people have worked hard and effectively to implement the vision of Albert Coates. Last week two of those people, Rich Ducker and Janet Mason, were honored for dedicating their careers to the mission of the Institute and the School. Rich and Janet are excellent examples of faculty members who have helped to lift the administration of public affairs in North Carolina to the highest possible standards.

Rich is working part-time in phased retirement and he was honored by the state planners at their annual conference. He received the Robert Reiman Professional Achievement Award "for a career of service to the state's planning community." Janet, who will retire at the end of the year and work part-time next year, was honored by the district court judges at their fall conference with a wonderful contribution to the Drennan Fund for Judicial Education. Earlier this year the social services attorneys surprised Janet by honoring her with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine.





The Institute and the School have a wonderful history of service to North Carolina, and it is common for public officials to express their strong appreciation to faculty members for their work. That work is supported by excellent professional staff members who often operate invisibly behind the scenes. The efforts of everyone are needed to sustain and advance Albert's vision. Many thanks for your commitment.