



John Sanders Receives Robert Morgan Service Award

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[The North Carolina Center for Voter Education](#) honored John Sanders last week with the 2013 Robert Morgan Service Award. The award is named for Robert Morgan, a distinguished public servant who served as North Carolina's Attorney General and then as one of its US Senators. This award was a part of the Spectrum of Democracy Awards "honoring vital contributions to North Carolina's democracy." [Here is a link](#) to a video about John that was shown at the award dinner last week. In many ways like the earlier example of Albert and Gladys Coates, it is worth noting that John's love and labor for the University and for North Carolina have been shared in full measure by his wife, Ann

In addition to recognizing John's contributions as a faculty member and Director of the Institute of Government, it also noted that he "played a pivotal part in developing the statewide community college system, integrating the University of North Carolina and in preserving the State Capitol building." John also served as a trusted resource for lawmakers in crafting the current North Carolina Constitution, adopted in 1971. According to the citation, "Mr. Sanders has been called 'North Carolina's invisible hand' because of his decades of humble, dedicated service in helping to shape politics, law and government in our state."



This is only the latest in a number of awards that John has received, and it is richly deserved. For me his largest influence may be the impact he had on all of the faculty members who served with him at the Institute. He demonstrated through his consistent example that excellence in all things matters, and that accepting less than excellence in small things might easily lead to mediocrity in large ones. He proved that focusing your life's work on improving one state is important and worth of your best efforts. He also showed a willingness to do whatever was necessary to carry out our mission for North Carolina?no matter how small the task or how personally inconvenient.

The values that guide our work today are John's values, and the values he taught us have become part of our organizational DNA. In that way his impact will continue to be felt far into the future. .