



Holden Thorp, ‘One of Our Own,’ Begins New Era as Carolina’s 10th Chancellor

Holden Thorp, a Carolina alumnus and faculty member, took office July 1 as the University’s 10th chancellor following a national search that ended with his unanimous election by the UNC Board of Governors in May. He will be installed as chancellor during a traditional University Day convocation on Oct. 12.

Thorp, previously dean of Carolina’s College of Arts and Sciences, succeeded James Moeser, who last September announced plans to step down June 30th after eight years and, after a year’s research leave, return as a professor.

A 1986 UNC graduate, Thorp, 43, has rapidly progressed through several leadership posts since joining the faculty 15 years ago. A native of Fayetteville, N.C., he is a Kenan Professor and an award-winning teacher and researcher. Thorp was the unanimous choice of the Chancellor Search Committee chaired by Trustee Nelson Schwab. He was nominated to the UNC System’s Board of Governors by UNC President Erskine Bowles.

Thorp had led the College of Arts and Sciences since July 1, 2007. He also chaired the nationally recognized department of chemistry, where he has been a full professor since 1999. He was faculty director of a fundraising effort attracting about \$17 million for the Carolina Physical Science Complex as part of the Carolina First Campaign.

From 2001 to 2005, Thorp directed the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center, guiding efforts to expand the planetarium’s original emphasis to become a comprehensive science education center. Thorp established momentum for the first major renovation since the Morehead was built in 1947. Public attendance increased by 40 percent, and the Morehead created “DNA: The Secret of Life,” a film installed in science museums including the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

Thorp has published more than 130 scholarly articles on the electronic properties of DNA and RNA. He invented »



Dr. Holden Thorp speaks on campus May 8 after his election by the UNC Board of Governors.

“HOLDEN THORP IS AS TRUE BLUE A TAR HEEL AS THEY COME. HE FULLY UNDERSTANDS THE DEEP-ROOTED CONNECTION BETWEEN CAROLINA AND THE PEOPLE OF THIS STATE, AND THE SELECTION OF ONE OF OUR OWN SPEAKS VOLUMES ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THE LEADERSHIP WITHIN THIS UNIVERSITY.”

– UNC President Erskine Bowles

University community members cheer and clap as Holden Thorp enters Gerrard Hall to speak at a campus reception after his election.



“WE UNDERTOOK A NATIONAL SEARCH TO FIND THE VERY BEST PERSON IN AMERICA TO FOLLOW JAMES MOESER AND TO LEAD OUR UNIVERSITY. WE FOUND THAT PERSON IN HOLDEN THORP AFTER INTERVIEWING 20 OF AMERICA’S BEST AND BRIGHTEST LEADERS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION, ALL OF WHOM VERY MUCH WANTED THIS JOB BECAUSE OF THE GREAT THINGS THAT ARE GOING ON AT THIS UNIVERSITY. THE VERY FIRST TIME THAT WE VOTED ON OUR PREFERENCE FOR CHANCELLOR, THE VOTE WAS 20 TO NOTHING FOR HOLDEN THORP.”

– Roger Perry, chair, University’s Board of Trustees and co-vice chair, Chancellor Search Committee

» technology for electronic DNA chips that is the basis of 19 issued or pending U.S. patents. One invention provides a less expensive blood test to determine if prospective parents carry the cystic fibrosis gene. For his DNA chip technology, Thorp was recognized as one of the Top Innovators of 2001 by *Fortune Small Business* magazine. In 2005 he co-founded Viamet Pharmaceuticals Inc., which targets metalloenzymes in infectious disease, inflammation and oncology.

Thorp has received several major national science awards and fellowships from the federal government and private foundations. At Carolina, his honors include awards for undergraduate teaching and scholarly achievement. He delivered the December 2006 Commencement address and is an accomplished musician who plays jazz bass and keyboard.

Thorp received his bachelor of science degree with highest honors in chemistry from UNC in 1986. He earned a doctorate in chemistry from the California Institute of Technology in 1989, was a postdoctoral associate at Yale University and an assistant professor of chemistry at N.C. State University. He joined the UNC faculty in 1993. ~

Holden Thorp’s Path to the Chancellorship: Milestones From a Career

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| 1986 B.S., chemistry, with highest honors, UNC | 1989 Ph.D., chemistry, California Institute of Technology | 1989–90 Postdoctoral fellowship, Yale University | 1991 Appointed assistant professor of chemistry, N.C. State University National Science Foundation Presidential Young Investigator David and Lucile Packard Fellowship in Science and Engineering | 1993 Returned to UNC as assistant professor of chemistry | 1995 Camille Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Award | 1996 UNC’s Ruth and Philip Hettleman Prize for Artistic and Scholarly Achievement Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship |
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A LIGHT *on the* HILL for NORTH CAROLINA:

Excerpts from Chancellor Thorp's Acceptance Speech

... This is the best job in American higher education, and it is a great honor to be chosen. I see my mentor James Moeser here, and I am even more humbled. He has been a magnificent leader for Carolina, and he is leaving the University in a position of great strength.

Ever since I was a kid growing up in Fayetteville, Carolina has been that light on the hill. My father used to sing "Hark the Sound" to me at bedtime. Usually after a few choruses of "I Zigga Zoomba." It sounds crazy now, but I only sent in one college application. Thank goodness I was accepted. Thank goodness I had the opportunity to attend a world-class research university, because I got to work in chemistry labs with some of Carolina's best faculty. Those experiences inspired me to be a college professor and instilled in me the hope that one day I would get what I *thought* was my dream job – to be chair of the chemistry department at Chapel Hill. Now, you've given me the opportunity to serve my University and my state in a way I *never* dreamed.

These are challenging times, I know. But North Carolina, in spite of the difficulties we face, promises a great future. Why? Because the idea of a research university – a place where research and teaching are done *by the same people* – is a bold and audacious idea, the very fabric of American prosperity and innovation.

And you know what? There's one idea that's even better than a research university – and that's a *public* research university. Thank goodness our founders went down to my hometown of Fayetteville in 1789 to convince the Legislature that our state needed a university here at home. And thank goodness we have a General Assembly that has long recognized the value of our universities.


President Bowles and the Board of Governors have shown great leadership in launching the UNC

Tomorrow initiative. As a result, we all have a deeper understanding of the state's needs. I pledge to you that Chapel Hill will work with our sister campuses to create solutions that will propel North Carolina into the future.

We have so much work ahead of us. Our to-do list is nothing less than the greatest problems of our time: Cure diseases, and get those cures to *all* the people who need them. Find and invent clean energy. Inspire students in our public schools. Feed seven billion people. Describe the world, and replace conflict with understanding.

Today a child of modest means was born somewhere in North Carolina. And despite the long odds of her circumstances, she's going to excel in public school and have the potential to solve one of these big problems. She probably won't want to go to college very far away from her family. And 18 years from now when that happens, we'll be ready. We'll be ready to promise that she has a fair shot to get in to Carolina. We'll be ready to guarantee she can afford to be here. And we'll be ready to see to it that she gets a world-class education from a great research university right here in her home state.

And that's why Carolina is today what she has always been ... the light on the hill.

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine. 

These excerpts are from Thorp's acceptance speech on May 8 after being unanimously elected by the UNC Board of Governors.

Our to-do list is nothing less than the greatest problems of our time: Cure diseases, and get those cures to all the people who need them. Find and invent clean energy. Inspire students in our public schools. Feed seven billion people. Describe the world, and replace conflict with understanding.

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| 1998 UNC's Tanner Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching | 1999 Promoted to professor | 2001 Named director, Morehead Planetarium and Science Center Listed among the Top Innovators of 2001 by Fortune Small Business magazine for his DNA chip technology | 2002 Named Distinguished Young Alumnus by General Alumni Association Appointed faculty director of fundraising for the Carolina Physical Science Complex, UNC's largest construction project | 2005 Appointed Kenan Professor of Chemistry and chair of the Department of Chemistry Co-founded Viamet Pharmaceuticals Inc., a biotechnology company | 2007 Appointed dean, College of Arts and Sciences | 2008 Elected Carolina's 10th chancellor |
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An Open Letter from the Carolina First Campaign Co-Chairs

Dear Carolina Alumni, Colleagues and Friends,

Carolina has always been an amazing place. The incomparable beauty of the campus. The history as the nation's first public university. The legacy of leadership and public service. The world-class faculty and outstanding student body. All are without parallel.

But our recently completed Carolina First Campaign has truly set our great University apart.

Carolina First has been an extraordinary success, and the tireless efforts of Carolina's alumni, colleagues and friends like you propelled the Carolina First Campaign to an historic \$2.38 billion mark when it concluded Dec. 31, 2007. Our Carolina campaign now stands as the fifth largest completed campaign in the history of U.S. higher education, and the best campaign ever conducted in the South. For these remarkable achievements, Carolina extends its deep appreciation to you.

We could not have reached such a milestone without the dedication and commitment of our alumni and supporters. A special thanks goes to the nearly 200,000 donors who contributed to Carolina First.

Carolina First is already moving our University from greatness to pre-eminence. But even with the success of the campaign, fund raising must continue to keep our momentum strong so UNC can take its place as the nation's leading public university.

It is a most exciting time to be a Tar Heel, with Chancellor Holden Thorp starting his tenure full of promise after a spectacular performance by James Moeser for eight years. We are grateful for all you have done, and continue to do, for Carolina. To continue supporting the University, consider making a donation using the enclosed gift form or visit <http://giving.unc.edu/gift>.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Fulton
Co-Chair
Carolina First



Mike Overlock
Co-Chair
Carolina First



Charlie Shaffer
Co-Chair
Carolina First