

# Tar Heel of the Year

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## The Goodnights: Tar Heels of the Year

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### TAR HEELS OF THE YEAR

1997: Hugh McColl

CEO of NationsBank

1998: John Hope Franklin

historian

1999: Franklin Graham

missionary

2000: Larry Wheeler

director of the N.C. Museum of Art

2001: Molly Broad

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UNC system president

2002: Kay Yow

N.C. State women's basketball coach

2003: Jim Goodmon

CEO of Capitol Broadcasting

2004: Howard Manning Jr.

Wake County Superior Court judge

2005: Martin Eakes

CEO of Self-Help Credit Union

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### By Kristin Collins and Craig Jarvis, Staff Writers

Jim and Ann Goodnight married 40 years ago at a church in Harnett County, expecting an anonymous life. Maybe a three-bedroom house, vacations at the beach. Somewhere along the line, Jim created a computer program that changed how the world manages data -- and it made the Goodnights billionaires. They found themselves at the helm of an empire.

His Cary-based company, SAS Institute, now employs 10,000 people in more than 50 countries. And their influence stretches well beyond the business world.

The Goodnights have changed North Carolina in ways that affect every person who has visited the state art museum or sent a child to a Wake County public school.

After years of trying to avoid the spotlight, of building a private world that some call "SASland," they are, with trepidation, venturing onto the public stage and making a mark that can be etched only with great wealth.

"They understand that civic responsibility to lead," said Larry Wheeler, director of the N.C. Museum of Art, which has been a major beneficiary of the Goodnights' giving. "But at the same time, they're still the same receding, private people. They don't seek the limelight, and they don't seek the high-profile social life."

This fall, they used their might to help push through the largest school construction bond proposal in Wake County history, \$970 million. Ann led the campaign, and Jim sent e-mail messages to all his 4,000 Wake County employees urging them to vote yes.

Over the past decade, they have spent millions building an art collection that will eventually belong to North Carolina, they say. They also have helped reshape the museum grounds, stepping in with a \$1 million donation to tear down a dilapidated prison next door to make room for a park.

With impatience for bureaucracy and a keen sense of what the future of education should look like, they have provided money, computers and training to Triangle universities, high schools and elementary schools. They have created a private prep school as a model of their vision: classrooms where teachers engage students with technology rather than relying on blackboards and textbooks, the tools used since the Industrial Revolution.

Their other beneficiaries include soccer players, symphony musicians and politicians from both parties.

Precisely how much money they have given away is unknown because they don't publicize their gifts. Jim Goodnight said the couple's philanthropy, combined with the company's giving, adds up to about \$100 million.

The Goodnights' contributions are not on a par with the largesse enabled by family-dynasty money such as that of the Duke Endowment. Nor is Jim Goodnight among the 50 most generous philanthropists in the United States. But Goodnight, who is No. 52 on the Forbes list of the 400 richest Americans, says his first priority has always been

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employees. And he has given far more than most of the Triangle's wealthy.

The Goodnights have taken on the role of local and global leaders while trying to be the same people they were when they began: the products of small-town, middle-class North Carolina.

The Goodnights are the state's wealthiest couple -- worth between \$4.1 billion and \$4.5 billion, according to Forbes -- and they have responded to the scrutiny their fortune brings by building well-fortified walls around themselves.

### Years of privacy

For years, they were so private as to appear mysterious. They built a house protected by electronic gates and invisible from the road on 51 acres next to SAS' Cary campus.

They avoided interviews. Jim declined invitations to conferences. He even refused to allow his photo in SAS advertisements.

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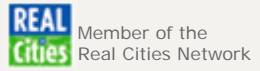


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