

TRIANGLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

Editor's Notebook: Raleigh's Joyner made major impact

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It's hard to believe he is gone.

About 35 days ago, I talked to him about a friend who was having trouble finding a place to store her belongings after her house sold and the one she wanted to buy fell through after a poor inspection report.

Gary Joyner, the 59-year-old managing partner of Kilpatrick Townsend and a close friend of mine for almost 15 years, offered up his basement at his Raleigh residence to store all the belongings.

That was just like Joyner – finding solutions and helping people in need.

On Aug. 8, unexpectedly, Joyner took his last breath after fighting a slew of medical conditions that engulfed him swiftly.

His legacy, however, will live on for a long time.

You see, in the past two decades, much of Wake County's, and the region's, economic development success had one thing in common – Joyner's leadership and his uncanny ability to get things done.

For more than 20 years, among other things, he led the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, Wake County economic development office, Research Triangle Regional Partnership and the Research Triangle Foundation. He was often the front person for negotiating expansions and relocations of companies to the area that created jobs and enriched the lives of thousands of residents who moved into our counties in search of a better life.

He was not the man who took the microphone at prominent economic development announcements. Instead, he preferred sitting at the very end of the line and thinking of ways to get every-



TBJ FILE PHOTO

Gary Joyner, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP.

one together for dinner to discuss how the executives could play a bigger role in becoming relevant corporate citizens.

An unassuming man who always looked straight into your eyes when chatting, Joyner loved his work – and he loved his daughters.

In fact, he was looking forward to spending time with one of his daughters in Italy in the summer.

He talked about getting friends together to go to a UNC basketball game this winter – of course, dinner in Chapel Hill before the game was an absolute must.

I will miss Joyner, and not just because we spent a fair amount of time together away from work. I will miss him because I know how much he did for our community.

Listening to him talk about Chatham Park – a massive mixed-use development in Chatham County fronted by Preston Development's Bubba Rawl and Tim Smith – sounded like Joyner was building a mini-town. He knew

he was extending the boundaries of the Triangle, and he knew massive developments such as these eventually will have enough density for us to talk about future infrastructural needs.

Joyner thought ahead – that's why he was a very good lawyer, very good economic developer and a very good negotiator. But perhaps, most notably, he genuinely cared about his family and his friends.

No surprise that some of his closest business partners and professional colleagues such as Roy Mashburn, and former U.S. Ambassador Jim Cain are in shock and at a loss for words these days – this was all too sudden, and with an uncompromising finality.

Joyner's positive contribution to our communities will be magnified in the coming years as residential and commercial projects come online, enriching the lives of all of us.

Now, it is upon us to continue that legacy of service, compassion and contribution.