

# T. JERRY WILLIAMS

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### To Whom It May Concern

My life experiences while growing up on a Pitt County tobacco farm in Bethel, North Carolina, working in two restaurants, broadcasting as “TJ the DJ” on commercial radio while attending East Carolina College/University, followed by over four years in banking, prepared me for the past 45 plus years as a lobbyist and provider of government relations services. I’ve also managed to travel to Canada, Mexico and Europe.

In order to get off the family farm at an early age, I worked as a bag boy for Billy Whitehurst at the B&W Supermarket in Bethel, NC. While in high school and college I worked for Dennis and Frances Hardy at the Da-Nite Lunch, where you can today still get one of the best hamburgers in America, even though the restaurant was years ago moved across the street. The burgers are still great. Later I worked for Jerry and Shirley Herald at the Town House Restaurant in Windsor. So yes, I wore a cook’s apron for six years on weekends and during summer breaks. I mopped floors and did it all; but doing so taught me about assuming responsibility and the importance of not letting down those people who trust and depend upon you.

While majoring in English at East Carolina, I worked campus radio and television before moving on to commercial radio as an announcer and disc jockey. While in broadcasting and commercial radio I was fortunate to work for Stan Fox and Carl Venters, Jr., two North Carolina broadcasting icons and radio executives I greatly admired. I also got to work “on air” with Dean Roebuck and “Slim” Short; two of the finest ever radio men. Of course Slim was big in TV, too. Years later I would again work with The Honorable Stan Fox as he served in the North Carolina General Assembly as a member of the North Carolina House of Representatives. And too, I always appreciated the fact that Stan recognized and exemplified the honor found in “service to others.”

In 1965 I left broadcasting to spend over four years in banking at Edgecombe Bank & Trust Company, now a part of BB&T, in Tarboro, NC. While banking taught me about finances it also taught me the importance of community stewardship and that it’s something we should all practice our whole life. Over the years I have continued to use the public relations and financial knowledge I picked up in broadcasting and banking. In fact, I still use many of those experiences regularly to the advantage of my clients.

After reading through a 1969 supplement in *Fortune Magazine*, about the restaurant and foodservice industry, I applied for and landed a position as CEO and lobbyist for the North Carolina Restaurant Association. It was there I immediately determined (as Representative Stan Fox knew all along) that “service is an honorable profession.” And too, I got to lobby not only the North Carolina General Assembly and state regulatory agencies but also members of the North Carolina Congressional Delegation and federal regulatory agencies in conjunction with the National Restaurant Association and my fellow state restaurant association executives across America.

Additionally, I enjoyed my work in conjunction with the American Culinary Federation, Appalachian State University and North Carolina Central University. My work to help establish both the ASU and NCCU hospitality programs, later getting involved with the hospitality program at East Carolina University and to establish restaurant management programs in the North Carolina Community College System are among my life’s most satisfying industry education efforts.

**Rather than letting things happen to you, let them happen because of you.**

Those efforts subsequently resulted in my work as one of the co-founders of the North Carolina Culinary, Hospitality and Tourism Education Alliance (CHTEA). I also spent over three decades on the board of the Travel Council of North Carolina, (now the North Carolina Travel Industry Association) and I was a co-founding member of the North Carolina Travel and Tourism Coalition and worked with travel industry officials to pass legislation to create the North Carolina Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, originally functioning as part of the North Carolina Department of Commerce. That board is now under the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. So my efforts while working as a legislative and regulatory advocate for segments of the travel industry have always been challenging and rewarding. And too, at one point I was the senior state restaurant association executive and lobbyist in America, based upon years of continuing service.

Today my fingerprints are on hundreds of laws and regulations that I worked on to enact, defeat, repeal or adopt over the last 45 plus years. Many I initiated, others I had favorably amended, defeated or repealed on behalf of my client(s). Many of those successes were accomplished either alone or in coalition with others. For example, I learned much about determination and patience while spending over eight years lobbying one specific issue with others. Although success was almost nine frustrating years in the making, it was worth the effort.

Because every man and woman has their own story, I have always continued to learn from those around me. I learned to discover and borrow from the successes as well as mistakes of others.

On July 4, 2000, I worked to coordinate the world's largest 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration outside the continental United States, for the U. S. Ambassador to Canada. I was asked to do so by my friend Gordon Clapp, then our state travel and tourism director. We served all North Carolina food and drink and featured North Carolina entertainment. The Ambassador and his team were thrilled with my efforts and the results. James B. Hunt, a former governor of North Carolina, to this day, tells me how great the event turned out for our State. I was told the U. S. Ambassador had over 6,800 guests from 98 countries take part in the event.

Since then I have worked to develop other projects and plans to benefit our state where I see a need. None of these have been put into place yet; but I am ready to help push and promote them when the time comes.

First is my idea for a North Carolina Farm Commodity and Agriculture Research Center (NCFCARC), designed to help the farmers and fishermen of our 40 most eastern counties. I also have an idea for several regional satellite facilities in the form of a North Carolina Food Innovation Technology Center (NCFITC) to be located in the various economic development regions of the state. Since over 96 percent of the world's population live outside the United States, I am confident our state and its regions should be working to export more food products.

North Carolina also needs a North Carolina Global Trade Center (NCGTC) and a North Carolina Economic and Natural Disaster Task Force (NCENDTF) to establish strategic plans for disasters and economic programs by region. I have worked on a concept for both for future use.

Another concept of mine is for a Mountain and Coastline Coalition of North Carolina (MCCNC) as well as a North Carolina Mountain and Coastline Caucus (NCMCC). The purpose would be to leverage political clout to protect the interests of the mountains and our coastline from over development, while helping the mountains and coastal regions prosper. By working together, I believe our mountains and coast can better enjoy their heritage and culture without being over-run by development or being "left behind" by the State budget needs of our urban areas. We need to advance environmental literacy and mobilize environmental stewardship. Continuing the suburbanization of our mountains and coast could become costly to all peoples of this state and our future.

My final concept is for a replica of Queen Ann's Revenge, Blackbeard's pirate ship, to be built in conjunction with the Maritime Museums of North Carolina. It could become a major travel and tourism attraction and could be used to promote boat and ship building in the state. Our grandchildren would love it and I am confident it would become another travel industry icon that brings travelers and tourists to North Carolina.

Here I am reminded of John Steinbeck and Edward F. Ricketts and their study of the SEA OF CORTEZ. So often while watching the birth or death of specific legislation and regulations that impact our very lives, our economy and our environment, I am reminded of this passage from their journal: *“Let us go into the Sea of Cortez, realizing that we become forever a part of it: that our rubber boots slogging through a flat of eelgrass, that the rocks we turn over in a tide pool, make us truly and permanently a factor in the ecology of the region. We shall take something away from it, but we shall leave something, too.”* I particularly remember their closing line, *“And if we seem a small factor in a huge pattern, nevertheless it is of relative importance.”*

So much of what we do is of relative importance, even when not recognized as such. Therefore, it is easy for me to imagine both Steinbeck and Ricketts, if they were alive today, scolding so many of our citizens and public officials for allowing the over development of our mountains and coastline.

Since my late teens, I have tried to identify with those good and successful individuals I meet. I often try to emulate them. I even try to learn from their mistakes and my own, because learning never stops. In life, to end up a mile down the road we must be prepared to travel several times that distance. Remember, the rivers of our nation don't run straight. They meander! So does life's journey.

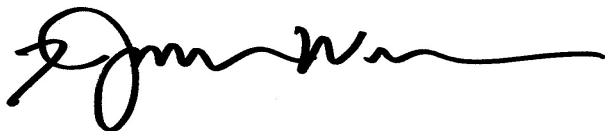
Fortunately, I also learned early that we must always invest 15 to 20 percent of our time in “continuing education.” Doing so is essential for our continued success. And too, we must take time to mentor others and even take time to be good to ourselves. We must never give up the struggle and we cannot afford to forget that it is the journey in life that counts.

I am a firm believer that the facts are forever unimpaired and that what is true about a circumstance or situation depends upon its rightness. Always a believer in slogans, I choose some years ago, to put my faith in the following: *“Rather than letting things happen to you, let them happen because of you.”*

While my activities over the last 45 plus years have not been specifically limited to lobbying, I must add the other activities that I have mentioned here are also of relative importance and have played a significant role in my continuing education.

Therefore, if you agree with my philosophy and approach to the legislative and regulatory process for North Carolina, and if I can assist you and your team with your legislative or regulatory goals, agenda, economic development initiative or your environmental defense and regional efforts, without being in conflict with my existing clients, just let me know. Even if you do not need a lobbyist, you or your firm may need someone to monitor the legislative and regulatory process as part of your strategic plan. So feel free to call me if you think I might be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Jerry Williams', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

T. Jerry Williams

P.S. Happy Trails!

March 26, 2016