

Terry Sanford



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Terry Sanford (1917-1998) was one of the most important public figures of the postwar South. First as North Carolina's governor and later as president of Duke University, he demonstrated a dynamic style of progressive leadership marked by compassion and creativity. "Outrageous Ambition" tells the story of Sanford's beginnings, his political aspirations, his experiences in office, and, of course, his numerous accomplishments in the context of a period of revolutionary change in the South. After defeating a segregationist campaign in 1960 to win the governorship, Sanford used his years in office to boost public education and advance race relations. A decade later, at the height of tumult on American campuses, Sanford assumed the presidency of Duke University and led it to its position as one of the top universities in the nation. During his more than fifty years as a public servant he was associated with presidents John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Jimmy Carter. Sanford was a presidential candidate himself in 1972 and 1976, and he won election to the United States Senate in 1986 where his international commission produced an economic recovery plan for Central America. As one of the last New Deal Democrats in the Senate, he remained passionate about the opportunity for leaders to use government to improve people's lives. "Outrageous Ambition" draws on Sanford's considerable private and public archive as well as on the recollections of Sanford himself and his family, colleagues, and friends. This biography offers a unique perspective on North Carolina life, politics, political personalities, and the shifting public allegiances of the second half of the twentieth century that transformed life both in North Carolina and throughout the American South.

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