Theme Music (00:01):

Please listen carefully.

Taylor Pardue (00:07):

Welcome to the NC State Philanthropy Podcast, telling the world how we Think and Do through the support of our friends, alumni and more. I'm your host, Taylor Pardue.

# (00:18):

On this episode, we're joined by Andy Albright, a proud NC State alumnus, entrepreneur, motivational speaker and Wolfpack donor, to discuss how his support has furthered efforts all across our campuses.

# (00:32):

Thanks so much for joining us on the NC State Philanthropy Podcast today, Andy. To kick things off, just tell listeners a little bit about your early life and what first brought you to NC State.

Andy Albright (00:53):

Well, first, Taylor, thanks for having me.

Taylor Pardue (00:54):

Thank you.

Andy Albright (00:54):

I appreciate it. Anything to do at NC State ...

Taylor Pardue (00:56):

We appreciate it. Yeah.

Andy Albright (00:57):

... anything to do at NC State, I'm all in. So, I'm from Burlington, North Carolina, which is just an hour down the road. Both my parents were big NC State fans. My dad was here at the university for a short period of time, but he got drafted into the Army, but he remained a big fan. So, I grew up, as a little kid, all I remember is being a big NC State fan. But what I do remember, when I was 10 years old, in 1974, being in front of those old-timey televisions and us winning the national championship with Norm Sloan and Tommy Burleson and Monte Towe — ah, losing my mind. I was so excited. So, that's one of my biggest memories as a kid is NC State and pulling for them and just being a big Wolfpack fan.

#### (01:41):

So, I was on a farm, you know, country kid, and, matter of fact, when people would ask me where I was going, if I was going to college, I would say, "I'm going to NC State." They'd say, "Have you considered anywhere else?" I was like, "No. No interest. I'm an NC State guy." And so, I came to NC State to go some college.

Taylor Pardue (02:01):

Sounds great. Love that early connection to it. When you got here, you were, or ended up being an alum of the, what is now the Wilson College of Textiles. Talk a little bit about how you came here and found the textiles program and kind of what that was like for you.

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Andy Albright (02:18):
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So, in high school, I'm going to NC State. So, they send recruiters around recruiting kids to come to NC State. So, a guy comes, Jimmy Stevens from the textile school. I don't care where he is coming from; he's NC State. So, he says, "Who wants to go to NC State?" Raised my hand. "I'm going to NC State." And he's like, "Which school?" And I was like, "Uh ... NC State." And so, he goes, "Textile school? Engineering?" I'm like, "I don't ... I am going to NC State, baby. Yeah." And so, he says, "What about the textile school?" I said, "I'm in. Textile school."

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Taylor Pardue (02:57):
Really?

Andy Albright (02:57):
Now, you understand, North Carolina, back in the day, textile mills everywhere.

Taylor Pardue (03:03):
Absolutely.

Andy Albright (03:03):
So, you know, [I] didn't grow up in textiles, but I know, everybody I know works in textiles. So, I was like, "I'm in. Textile school." So, that was my deal.

(03:15):
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So, coming down here, almost everybody in the textile school came from textile backgrounds — whatever it was, whether it was chemical, manufacturing, management. I didn't care. So, I came into what would've been a textile engineering really having never been in a textile mill. So, it was a little bit weird for me, but I caught on. They were nice, and I couldn't have had a better experience at the textile school. I just loved all the people. I loved the professors and getting to know the other kids that loved NC State and the dorm. I was in Lee [Hall], and everybody in that dorm, or in my suite, was as fanatical [about] NC State as I was. So, I just thought I had died and went to heaven.

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Perfect.

Andy Albright (04:01):
I mean, I was so fired up.

Taylor Pardue (04:02):
Yeah, that was a good time. You graduated in '86, I believe. That was a good time; your tenure here was a good time for us.
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Andy Albright (<u>04:09</u>): Well, my freshman year, 1983 — national championship. So, when you're 10 years old and you're dream,

Taylor Pardue (04:17):

Taylor Pardue (04:01):

It's a dream come true.

Andy Albright (<u>04:17</u>):

I start crying. I mean, I can't watch the 30 [for] 30 series "Survive and Advance." I can't do it, because that was my freshman year. I mean, it's so much fun. And grades went down, the attitude was up. And, of course, here I am, same thing today: I'm looking national championship. Right.

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Taylor Pardue (04:40):
Sounds great.

Andy Albright (04:40):
We gotta do it again.

Taylor Pardue (04:41):
Yeah.

Andy Albright (04:41):
So, it was a blast.

Taylor Pardue (04:43):
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So, you're here. You're here at a great time. You graduate. Talk about that first little bit of post-graduate life. You went out of here, and you've done so much as an entrepreneur, in business especially, but you've done so much as an author, a motivational speaker since then. Talk a little bit about how you reconnected with university as an alum and how you've taken what you've learned here and really tried to spread the word and help others succeed, too.

#### Andy Albright (05:07):

That's a lot. That's a lot. So, I started businesses while I was in school. As far as I know, there was no Entrepreneur School at NC State. I've never heard of anything like that. And, you know, now it's the Albright Entrepreneurs Village at NC State. But back then, I don't think there was one that I know of, but I wanted to be in business. I don't care what it was. I grew up selling watermelons and peanuts and corn. We'd rake up pine needles, we'd sell goats, livestock. I was saying, "How can I be in business?" So, I loved what I did at textile engineering, or textile science, because of the mathematics of everything and the formulas and the algebra. That's what I got the biggest kick out of, is the mathematical equation, statistics, anything like that. Just like, what's the odds that I'm going to win, or, what's the odds that this is going to break? That sort of thing.

#### (06:05):

So, self-employed, always doing something on the side, call me a hustler, but I fell in love with the girl I'm still married to. I fell in love, and she was like, the life of an entrepreneur, up and down. So, I had to get a normal job. So, I ended up with Burlington Industries: the big corporate, back then, big-time international company based out of America, textile manufacturer. And I went to work with them, got married right out of college and went to work on this career. But at night, I was always hustling. All my bosses would laugh at me, "What do you think? You think you're going to be something, or you think that you're going to move up?" And I was like, "I don't know." I just got a kick out of doing stuff

business-wise, and tell you the truth, I just started making enough money on the side that my wife, who she's got an undergraduate from UNC Greensboro, master's degree from Fayetteville State.

# (07:06):

And I told her, I said, "If you want to stay home," we were going to have a child, our first child, Haley. And I was like, "It don't matter." And so, I just kept building these businesses, and eventually I told her, I said, "I love what I'm doing, I love it." But it's so annoying that I couldn't fly to Chicago. I couldn't go to the Philippines. I couldn't go to Hawaii. I couldn't drive somewhere and be gone for two days. They would be upset.

Taylor Pardue (07:40):

Mutually exclusive.

Andy Albright (07:40):

You've got to do your job. And I'm thinking, I got to have more flexibility. And my dad, who I said was a big NC State fan, the Army, he was dying of Parkinson's disease, and I wanted to get my kids around him. So, she walked away from her job. I walked away from mine. So, we moved back near our parents in Burlington, actually moved into the house that my dad built that I grew up in.

Taylor Pardue (08:06):

OK.

Andy Albright (08:06):

So, because my parents had got older. So, we moved back in that with all my ideas and all my hustling was going on. I don't know if I'm even answering your question.

Taylor Pardue (08:18):

No, no, no. I keep thinking of, what's the phrase, "Do what you have to do until you can do what you want to do." That just comes to mind.

Andy Albright (08:24):

Right. And another thing is, if you love it — N247RU. This didn't come about day one, but this was me when I was working in a corporate job. I was working at night and dreaming. When I was sleeping, I was dreaming. You know what I mean? And with my wife and my children, I'm just, let's go. Let's have a good time. Let's do not set around. And so, when I'm in 24/7, I just started building businesses. And I won't say I got away, but I was so involved in my businesses, I was not involved in NC State whatsoever, which, today, my friends that were with me in business, I've got people been in business with me for 33 years, and they go, "Do you remember back when we were building the companies? You didn't ever mention NC State basketball, football, baseball — nothing." It was just about creating the business with my friends.

# (<u>09:40</u>):

So, there came a point where I'm looking around going, "This has been a blast, building this company, but I [would] really like to get back connected to NC State." If you can call going to school here was "connected." I was a student. I wasn't involved. I played intramural sports and had a great time. Went to class, but I wasn't "involved" — I was just scared. So, I was thinking, wouldn't it be cool to get back

involved with sports, with academics, with the kids? And so, that's when I started asking around. Who do I talk to at NC State if I'd be interested in that? And that's kind of what brought me back into it.

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Taylor Pardue (10:25):
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And you've done so much since you've been back. Yeah. Talk a little bit about the "why" of — you've already spoken to this a little bit, about "why" NC State, in particular.

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Andy Albright (10:38):
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You got to pick a team. Here's something we say a lot. "If not for the grace of God, there go I." See, what that means to me: If it wasn't for God and my parents, I might be a Tar Heel. Imagine that.

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Taylor Pardue (10:57):
Sure.
Andy Albright (10:58):
I mean, don't you feel fortunate?
Taylor Pardue (11:01):
I do. Very blessed. Absolutely.
Andy Albright (11:04):
What if that's the way you grew up?
Taylor Pardue (11:04):
Yeah.
Andy Albright (11:06):
You know what I'm saying?
Taylor Pardue (11:07):
Sure.
Andy Albright (<u>11:07</u>):
My parents, thank God, were NC State [fans]. So, I became an NC State [fan]. I followed in their
footprints, and I became [an] NC State [fan]. And so, then my question was, "If I'm such a big fan, how
come I'm not helping? If I love them and I'm grateful, why am I not helping?" And a buddy actually said
he knew the chancellor.
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Taylor Pardue (<u>11:32</u>): Oh, OK.
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Andy Albright (<u>11:32</u>):

And said, would you like an introduction? Yes, I would like an introduction. And so, that's the way it started. And so, I started with the chancellor, and he said, "What do you want to do?" I said, "I want to give back." And he said, "How?" I said, "Well, I just assumed.

# Taylor Pardue (11:49):

Sounds like the college recruiter coming around. I want to help NC State, but finding that path now to the College of Textiles.

Andy Albright (<u>11:56</u>): Yeah. Taylor Pardue (<u>11:57</u>): Yeah.

#### Andy Albright (11:57):

Same thing. So he says, "Where would you like to get involved?" And he started sending people to talk to me about it. "Would you be interested in [the] textile school?" And I say, "I'm not in textiles anymore. I love it. It was a great time." "Do you like engineering?" I'm like, "It's a lot of math." And it just kept going on and on about, and I was like, "Can I just give you the money and y'all decide what to do with it?" And they were like, "It don't work like that. It has to be something you believe in." And I was like, "I like football, I like basketball, I like everything about NC State. Can I just give it to NC State?" And they said, "How about the entrepreneur school or the entrepreneur village?" And that's when I said, "Y'all don't have that." So, apparently, it had started up with Tom Miller, and it was an initiative to help entrepreneurs or kids that were interested, students that were interested in starting their own business.

# (<u>12:57</u>):

And so, they said, "Would you like to meet the people in charge?" And of course, now it's Steve Markham. But so, I met with them, and they started introducing me to other people that they had assisted in business. And I was like, "I'm in." So, they said, "We'd like to do an entrepreneurial," I think we call it a "Wolf Tank." So, these kids that have business ideas and we'll give them money as an award, like a Contest, like a Shark Tank. And I was like, "I'm in."

#### (13:27):

So, they asked me if I would do \$100,000 for a contest. And I was like, "Sure, love to do it." And so, that's how it got started. And then we did that a couple of years. And then we said, "What would be nice [is] if we had a garage, a place to meet," and they're coming up with all these ideas of how we can help grow the village and how I can be involved with it. And that's when kind of the biggest contribution came about, when they said, "Let's start the Albright Entrepreneur Village."

## Taylor Pardue (13:59):

Well, you used a word that I really want to key in on. You said "involved." You didn't just say "give." What strikes me so much about your story and your involvement with NC State is, you get involved not just through giving and just saying "Take the money and use it wisely." You really give through your time and your talent, too. You're on advisory boards and different things here around our campus. Talk a little bit about what it's like to reconnect in that way to the university — to really be here and to be part of campus again.

## Andy Albright (14:26):

It's a dream come true. I've had access that I didn't know was available. I've got to have conversations with students that I didn't know that I would ever get to have those conversations, because my whole business has been about making a difference and helping people.

Taylor Pardue (<u>14:43</u>):

Sure.

Andy Albright (14:44):

OK. Now, let's be clear. Since I was a little kid, we wanted to make a profit. We're selling them watermelons and we sell them goats, we want to make a profit, but we wanted to do it, we wanted what we're doing for people to love it and enjoy it. So, for me, the giving back needs to be that they love it, they enjoy it and get something out of my conversations. So, to see the kids go, "Wow," or to give them a phone number or they text me about something, "I'm looking for a career. Can you point me in the ...?" I love it because it's what my business is all about is helping people making a difference. So, it's just what I do as a passion anyway.

Taylor Pardue (15:26):

Are there any stories that you feel like sharing that just stand out in your mind? Some of the success stories that you've really seen so far? Some of, maybe, the relationships you've made?

Andy Albright (<u>15:37</u>):

There's so many of them, but Bee Downtown, they came into Wolf Tank and said, "We've got this idea." [Leigh-Kathryn] Bonner, she says, "I got this idea that we're going to start this business." And I was like, "I like it." She's. I think, third-generation beekeeper, and she has this idea. And I was like, "I like it. I'm in. I'm voting for them." So, we gave her, I don't know if it was \$5,000 or \$10,000, may have been \$1,000, but it was significant to her.

Taylor Pardue (16:12):

To her, absolutely.

Andy Albright (<u>16:14</u>):

And I think, more so than the money, it was the endorsement. Now, she's one of the best speakers and endorsers of NC State. She's got these beehives all over the country in multiple states, very successful business. And she was just down in St. Petersburg, had dinner with me, her boyfriend and my wife, and we went out to dinner. And I'm just always encouraging her and her company and advice on banking, accounting, legal, anything that I can say, "Here's a group you can talk to" or "Here's my advice." She'd probably be one of my favorite ones, success stories. But there's a lot of them that I get a text or an email from, saying, "Guess what?"

(16:59):

Here's another one. How about this? The same kids that, 15 years ago, we supported have now become successful and they're back involved.

Taylor Pardue (17:11):

#### I love that.

## Andy Albright (<u>17:11</u>):

Now, they're bringing money back. So, you're creating that cycle of building the university. That's legacy, man. That's generational. When you get them coming back.

# Taylor Pardue (17:22):

We really talk up our Wolfpack, and we talk about that, but it's so nice to see stories, or hear stories, like this. It's not just a motto. It's not just our mascot and everything. We really, as a university, we stay connected, and we really rally around each other, and I love to hear stories like that.

# Andy Albright (17:37):

So, this is good for you. Good for any NC State. So, the gentleman that was talking to me, that introduced me to the chancellor. I was talking to him about connections. I was like, "Who should I connect with as my business becomes successful?" And he said, "There's no tighter-knit group than successful people from NC State." He said, "You've got to get connected to NC State alumni because they stick together." So, at my corporate staff, we've got almost a hundred employees, got 90. Some employees, cannot tell you how many, have come to me and said, "I'm an NC State graduate." And I go, "Hired." And then I go, "And what were you looking for, to do? What did you want to do? Because you're hired." And I've got them, been with me 15 years, that that's the reason.

### (18:27):

It sounds like, "No way." And I go, "That's what I do." And I've had people give me opportunities because, just simply, they meet me at a football game, they meet me at an alumni event, and then they give me an opportunity. So, I believe wholeheartedly and said, NC State is a great, tight community that cares about each other.

#### Taylor Pardue (18:48):

What would you say to somebody who, an alum or maybe just part of the larger community that just loves the university but maybe never came here, maybe they've never made a gift before, but they're looking to find that passion fund, that passion project. What would you say to them to really, and we've talked about this throughout, but really just why you view this as a worthy investment?

#### Andy Albright (19:13):

So, the first thought is this, is, giving back is not a responsibility. It's not a requirement. There's zero pressure. To me. On the other hand, it's one hell of an opportunity to give back. What a great chance in life to have the ability to give back. So, if you've got an opportunity in front of you, take advantage of it. So, that was my deal. I'm sitting here with the opportunity; I had the money, I've had the means, I've been through the beatings, the learnings, the things I've been through. So, I have the opportunity. So, I go to NC State and saying, find out what am I passionate about. Entrepreneur school, Sheldon Leadership [Center]. They came to me about that, and I was like, "What does it do?" He's a general, I'm very press. I respect the military. "Here's what we're doing. The Sheldon Leadership [Center] is going out in communities and coaching kids on leadership and personal development." Sure, I'm in. So, I found another thing I'm passionate about. National champions, baby. I mean, athletics, absolutely. So, they get me talking to Coach Doeren, which, by the way, all I'm doing is trying not to cry, talking to the head coach. And he's telling me how much they need an Albright Sports Medicine facility.

#### (20:41):

And he's telling me how this will help us get talent, retain talent, reduce injuries. I'm in. So, it's part of the Murphy Center. I've gotten to know Wendell Murphy. They call it the Murphy Center; that's Wendell's building. And so, I have completely fine, not me. I led the investment to redo the sports medicine floor. And there's a lot of other great people that jumped in behind it, but I did a lead sponsor there. So, that's been a lot of fun. And now, I don't think there's anybody more excited about name, image and likeness — NIL, which is sports. So, Savage Wolves, and now, One Pack. And don't get me wrong, there's some guys, Tom Lavoie and Reed Johnson and Clyde Phillips. Those guys are passionate. I think I'm more passionate, but I've got a lot of other things going on, but I'm so passionate about it. So, now to help obtain running backs, wide receivers, quarterbacks, defensive ends, the ability to jump in on something.

## (21:51):

So, anytime any of them, the coaches or the advancement teams, say anything about thanks for how much you do, I keep telling them, you ain't seen nothing yet. There's more coming, because it's opportunity to give. So, I'm keep trying to build my businesses and keep advancing so that I can turn around and give more, because I believe in what we stand for. I believe in NC State, I believe in the people. I believe in the corporate structure here. And so — oh, good parenting. No offense if your kids didn't go to Carolina, but daughter graduated NC State. She married an NC State graduate. Son, graduated NC State, married an NC State graduate and had first grandbaby. She's already got her Wolfpack outfit on. She's 10 days old. She always got it.

Taylor Pardue (22:46):

Congratulations.

Andy Albright (22:49):

So, now all the contributions, they get to take advantage of being a part of that legacy that's created and then sharing with them how good I feel. And now they're getting involved. Kind of their first involvement has been the NIL or the Savage Wolfpack, but they've been involved in all of it.

Taylor Pardue (23:10):

OK. That's what I love so much about your giving is, Entrepreneurship, Shelton Leadership, things like this, helping your family. It benefits so many people across campus and beyond in our Wolfpack versus maybe just one program or one area. You've really broadened out and just done so much for the whole university. You can really say "the university," not just individuals.

Andy Albright (23:35):

It is been a blast. I love it. I love the university. I love what it's done for my child. So many stories. Here's one. So, my son is one of the brightest, hardest-working kids, and he's just done some crazy stuff. Sometimes, he'll have the tight haircut like you, and sometimes it'll be down to just massive, long bushy hair. And in his long-hair days, he's so respectful. So, he's walking across campus, he's telling me this story, and he walks by Chancellor Woodson.

Taylor Pardue (24:07):

Ah, OK.

Andy Albright (24:07):

And he tells this guy, says, "Hold on one second." So, he runs over, and he says, "Hey, Chancellor Woodson." Randy talks to him, asks about me. And they're talking. And then he runs back and joins his friends, and his friend says, "Who was that?" And Spencer says, Ah, just a friend."

Taylor Pardue (24:22):

Didn't make a big deal out of it at all.

Andy Albright (24:23):

But to him, to recognize who the chancellor is when he walks by and to have the wherewithal to stop, go sell it, say hello, encourage the chancellor. We appreciate what you're doing. And for him to call me up and say, "Hey, guess what?"

Taylor Pardue (24:36):

Oh yeah.

Andy Albright (24:37):

You know what I mean? So, that respect, to see that passed along, because happiness is a big deal to me. Money's cool, but happiness is priority. And so, to be happy, you've got to be progressing and giving away. Everybody's got their own philosophy of happiness, but my happiness is flow. It's like, you got to get it in, and you got to give it out.

Taylor Pardue (25:04):

Love it.

Andy Albright (25:08):

I love our football players and our basketball players. They're always giving credit to the coach or giving credit to the other players. When you try to get it and bring it in and keep it in, no-go; it's got to come out. So, I'd say this: If you ain't happy, try giving some money away, or try getting involved, trying to help them out and being a part of somebody else's happiness. I promise you, you forget about your problems when you're helping somebody else.

Taylor Pardue (25:33):

That ethos, that spirit just definitely seems to fit NC State. It just radiates.

Andy Albright (25:38):

I think so. I felt it. I have felt so many people helping me in my career and my family life with my kids. For him to even, a chancellor, to stop and chat with this long-haired kid walking down the middle of campus, that's the way he would do. That's the way the chancellor would do with anybody. But I'm appreciative of that.

Taylor Pardue (25:56):

That is a huge vote of confidence, to be able to say that you helped both of your kids to come here and to continue that legacy.

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Andy Albright (26:04):
No offense to the ones that have kids go to ...
Taylor Pardue (26:07):
Not everybody can come here, but at least there are other universities that they can go to. If not, but ...
Andy Albright (26:13):
There's some backups.
Taylor Pardue (26:14):
There are some backups. But ...
Andy Albright (<u>26:17</u>):
Well, it is crazy here because how competitive it is to get into university.
Taylor Pardue (26:23):
True.
Andy Albright (26:23):
So, that's the other thing is, little Ada, she needs to start working on her grades, because she's going to
have to — and her extracurriculars, because they want you to, not only you got to have academics, you
got to be doing something extra outside of it. So, it is parenting, it's getting involved and getting them
involved in something else. It's fun. It's a neverending ... N247RU. So, this right here, it's a tail number
on my biggest jet. My biggest and fastest jet. This is the tail number. So, I knew I wanted 247.
Taylor Pardue (26:58):
Sure. Yeah.
Andy Albright (27:00):
If your jet is from America, it has to start with "N." So, if you ever see a private jet and the letter is
something else, it's from a different country. So, I wanted 247 because I love 24/7, and we couldn't
think of what to put on the end. So, we started looking through all that was available, and my Carolina
graduate media person says, "RU." And I go, "Are you?" He said, "I'm in 24/7. Are you?"
Taylor Pardue (27:28):
Love it.
Andy Albright (27:29):
And I said, "Get it, get it, get it." So, now we've got it on hats and jackets. It's kind of our go-to. And it
doesn't mean ... we don't work all the time, but when we're at the ball game, we're in 24/7.
Taylor Pardue (27:43):
Yeah. The passion is there.
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FINAL 3 (Completed 12/11/23)

Transcript by Rev.com

Page 11 of 13

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Andy Albright (27:45):
And when we work, we're 24/7. And if it's a birthday party, we're gonna go all-out.
Taylor Pardue (27:49):
Yeah.
Andy Albright (27:49):
It's a good way to put it. We're passion, our passion is in. So, if I don't have NC State, it's going to be
N247[RU], and it's probably going to have NC State on the side.
Taylor Pardue (28:00):
There you go.
Andy Albright (28:01):
Because I'm NC State 24/7. I'm going to live right up until I die.
Taylor Pardue (28:07):
Thank you so much for joining us on the podcast, but truly, thank you so much for all that you do for the
whole university. We try to tell you things like that, the chancellor and everybody, we really try to tell
you, but we really appreciate all that you do. You really make a huge difference here at your alma mater,
and we couldn't Think and Do without supporters like you.
Andy Albright (28:28):
I think they do a great job of showing me and my whole family, and I appreciate that. And like I said, we
feel like we're just getting started. A lot more to do, a lot more to give, a lot more to contribute. Thank
you. Hey, congratulations. Wolfpack graduate, and you got you a career here at NC State.
Taylor Pardue (28:44):
Thank you very much.
Andy Albright (28:45):
Fantastic, man.
Taylor Pardue (28:45):
It's great to be home.
Andy Albright (28:47):
You're in some great people, man. You're going to meet some great people, too. More connections.
Taylor Pardue (28:56):
To learn more about how Albright's giving has benefited NC State Innovation and Entrepreneurship,
please visit go.ncsu.edu/albright. If you'd like to hear even more stories of Wolfpack success, please
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