



## Mel Williams

- B.A. in economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- M.B.A. from Harvard University
- Awarded honorary Kauffman Fellow by the Center for Venture Education in 2012

# A Private Word With Mel Williams

**Before** Mel Williams co-founded TrueBridge Capital Partners in 2007, he co-founded UNC Management Co., which manages the endowment of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and other North Carolina institutions. His career also includes a stint as an entrepreneur in residence at Boston-based Commonwealth Capital Ventures.

**Q: What personal quality has helped you the most in your career?**

A: I would say that both my intellectual curiosity and persistence have helped me the most in my career. My curiosity drives me to constantly search for the reasons why things are happening, and my persistence helps me search for those answers when they are hard to find.

**Q: What is one thing people might be surprised to know about you?**

A: I find engaging with college students in an academic setting to be very rewarding. I enjoy guest lecturing on private equity topics at college campuses, and recently co-taught a private equity class at the UNC-Kenan Flagler Business School.

**Q: What is one of the most influential books you've read and why?**

A: *Physics of the Future* by Michio Kaku, because it highlights the real developments in technology that are currently taking place and how this technology will change our lives in very exciting ways.

**Q: What quality (or qualities) do you most appreciate in a friend or colleague?**

A: Intelligence, integrity and a strong work ethic, combined with a healthy dose of compassion. Over the course of my career, I have found these qualities to be the hallmarks of successful and enjoyable people.

**Q: What is the one thing you most like people to remember you for?**

A: I hope people will remember me for being a good person. For me, that good person is a good father, a good friend and someone who is respected, trusted and enjoyable to be around.

**Q: If you had to describe your work style in three words, which ones would you choose?**

A: Passionate, collaborative [and] creative.

**Q: What is your favorite sport?**

A: Basketball. I grew up in eastern North Carolina watching UNC basketball during an era when Dean Smith was leading his team to 11 Final Fours. The tradition of success and excellence that he set at the university drew me to basketball as a kid, and it remains my favorite sport today.

**Q: Name one thing you'd like to do before you die (or goal you'd like to accomplish) that you've yet to do (or accomplish)?**

A: I would like to see the birth of my great grandchildren.

**Q: Name one of the most valued traditions (or rituals) you have established either at your firm or in your family.**

A: We aim to build a culture of celebration at TrueBridge. Whenever we have a win, no matter the level or magnitude, we encourage everyone at the firm to ring the office bell so that we can celebrate our accomplishments. ■

–Compiled by Laura Kreutzer