Choosing the Place for Chancellor Emeritus Larry N. Vanderhoef’s memorial service was easy: the Mondavi Center. It’s big and he had declared, on the day of his inauguration in 1994, that UC Davis would build such a performance hall. It opened eight years later, one of his many legacies at the university he called home for more than 30 years until his death Oct. 15 of complications from successive ischemic strokes. He was 74.

Many other venues would have been appropriate for the Nov. 4 celebration of life—places where his leadership continues to resonate. There is the renowned UC Davis Medical Center, for example, which he and his team practically built from the ground up after buying the old Sacramento County Hospital for $1; and then there is our second quad, named the Vanderhoef Quad on the occasion of his retirement in 2009. This quad sits at the campus’ south entry, which he envisioned as UC Davis’ new “front door”—and which today includes the Buehler Alumni Center, Conference Center and hotel, Graduate School of Management and, of course, the Mondavi Center.

Other options included any lecture hall, classroom or research lab, or sports venue like The Pavilion where he watched so many basketball games as he enjoyed his cheese-drenched nachos. We also could have gathered around the bench that Staff Assembly dedicated in his honor, recognizing his devotion and commitment to staff.

A plant biologist by training, he served as provost and executive vice chancellor from 1984 to 1994, and as chancellor for 15 years after that. Under his watch, our reputation grew along with our enrollment and campus facilities. But his greatest legacy may be the way he led his life. He listened. He was kind. He cared. Indeed, his moral compass pointed UC Davis in all the right directions.

“Serving as UC Davis’ chancellor was the honor of a lifetime,” he wrote in the preface to his memoir. Make no mistake: The honor was all ours.