JOHN EHLE
NOVELIST
1925-2018

John Ehle carries the twin legacies of being one of North Carolina’s greatest writers as well as the motivating force that made North Carolina a national leader in education initiatives during the early 1960s.

Gov. Terry Sanford called Ehle his “one-man think tank” for proposing the North Carolina Fund to fight poverty, the N.C. School of the Arts as the nation’s first state-funded arts conservatory, and two programs to allow gifted high schoolers to reach their full potential: the NC School of Science and Mathematics, and the Governor’s School, which was the nation’s first summer program for gifted students.

He would go on to serve on a number of national organizations, including President Johnson’s Group for Domestic Affairs and the National Council for the Humanities.

Ehle’s breakthrough 1964 novel, “The Land Breakers,” was the first of seven novels he set in the Appalachian Mountains and won him critical acclaim. Ehle wrote four other novels as well as six non-fiction books. Two of his books were turned into films.

Ehle was elected to the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame and received the North Carolina Award, the state’s highest honor, in 2007.