Next: Reflection on Furman Going Forward

Maria Swearingen
Furman University

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Recommended Citation
Swearingen, Maria (2016) "Next: Reflection on Furman Going Forward," Furman Magazine: Vol. 59: Iss. 1, Article 15.
Available at: http://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol59/iss1/15

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The 1947 Willie Earle Trial is one infamous milestone. "If there has ever been a trial of the century, that’s the trial," says Bainbridge.

the outrage of national press covering the trial.

"If there has ever been a trial of the century, that’s the trial," says Bainbridge. "Not only because of the trial itself, but the impact it had and what it showed about this place. And it wasn’t nice at all. There were a lot of things in the history of the area that weren’t so pretty, and you can overlook that. But you can understand it, and that’s what I’m trying to do."

Bainbridge also chronicles the Bar’s diversification as it grew to include women, African Americans—anyone who wasn’t a white, male Protestant—and the Bar’s growing impact in the public sphere as the U.S. Supreme Court pushed for the establishment of a public defender’s office and free legal services for low-income residents in the 60s and 70s.

"The whole business of public defense is still underfunded," says Bainbridge, "but it flourished in Greenville because some people pushed to make sure it would stay."

Furman alumni have certainly played a role in that push.

"I think there is a supportive environment [at Furman] for people who want to do things in the public interest," says Bainbridge.

Mitchell elaborates:

"In my opinion, there’s this Furman contingent of public interest law-oriented people that we should be extremely proud of. The Furman grads that come back to Greenville—they tend to have an interest in seeing the continued progress and improvement in the aspirational side of law. They’re trying to create equality and justice."

In that sense, Attorneys & Law in Greenville County: A History, which is available for purchase on campus at the university’s Barnes & Noble bookstore, is more than a comprehensive accounting of a professional guild. It is a framing of Greenville’s growth—in all its fits and starts, pain and triumph—from the perspective of those who have been (and continue to be) driving forces for that progress.

The book adopts a resemblance to the Homeric catalogue of ships.