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Celebrating Success and Setting Futures

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GETTING ADVICE

Jarred Buchholz '18, an English major and aspiring writer from Columbia, South Carolina, moderated a panel discussion that included four successful alumni authors.

The first question English major and moderator Jarred Buchholz '18 asked the panel of fiction writers was, "What impact did your education at Furman have on your careers as writers?"

The four panelists were **Mindy Friddle '86, Tommy Hays '77, George Singleton '80 and Ed Tarkington '95**, all very successful fiction writers.

The occasion, organized by the English department to celebrate writing at Furman, drew about 100 students, faculty and community members to the McEachern lecture room. It was sponsored by the Crabtree-Stewart Lectureship in Literary Studies.

Celebrating Success and Setting Futures

BY WILLARD PATE

In answer to Buchholz's question, the panelists named several professors who had been instrumental in their development. Each also stressed the importance of their course readings. Interspersed with their often wildly humorous stories from the past, they offered advice

to aspiring writers. Later that evening, Friddle and Hays read from their works. The next day, Singleton and Tarkington read from theirs.

The entire two days were a celebration of their accomplishments, but also a celebration of Furman's impact on their careers. The

alumni-authors, students, faculty and members of the community mingled and shared ideas. The occasion was an illustration of President Elizabeth Davis' vision for Furman—The Furman Advantage—with engagement on many levels.

The symposium, held March 23 to 24, was also a celebration of the English department's offering of a new writing track in addition to the more traditional track English majors follow.

Students who choose this new option may take many of the same courses such as Shakespeare, American Novel and Victorian Literature. But in addition, they will be re-



Student and community members enjoyed hearing readings from **Mindy Friddle '86** (top) and others.

quired to take several writing courses in which they will read as writers rather than as literary critics.

And, instead of taking a senior seminar focusing on scholarly research, they will develop portfolios of their work that will position them to take the next steps toward their careers as writers.

Perhaps Buchholz should have the last word: "The

Furman Writers Symposium was particularly important to me because I'm an aspiring writer. At some point in their lives, each of the visiting writers was right where I am today. They know the difficulty of getting from Furman into the book writing and publishing world. And the fact that Furman was a catalyst in their success justified my decision to come here." ●



NOW

Reflection on Furman as it is now

I had never taken a serious art class before, so I was nervous on the first day of Art and Community Engagement this summer. I wanted everyone to be cool and have outgoing personalities. *MayX* should be super-fun, engaging and more laid-back than the traditional courses. And, to my relief, it was. Everyone worked together, put in equal amounts of work, and no one complained.

For the first time, I really got to know art and was able to meet those who have a passion for it. We participated in an art project in *Travelers Rest* and took part in *Artisphere*, an annual arts festival in downtown Greenville. The artists I've met seem to love what they do and value their craft.

While doing an interview for this course a woman told me, "Art makes life better and makes people happy. People need it. You see the kids enjoy it, but as you get older you give it up." This really hit home for me. And it's unfortunate. Art is so powerful because it is a reflection of the artist. Within the paintings, carvings and drawings, an artist attempts to convey a message.

Most football players would not have taken this class. I mean,

who expects a football player to end up in a painting class? But I like to branch out and do more than just athletics. I hope my actions inspire more athletes to do the same.

Some people don't appreciate athletes because they don't understand the work that goes into being an athlete. We wake up before the sun rises, practice, lift weights year-round and gain or lose weight to compete.

I will always be grateful that I enrolled in this class. Before this course, I never thought much about art and artists. I met a diverse group of people and saw that some artists put just as much effort into art as I do athletics. Now, I have a profound respect for their work.

It is amazing how liberal arts and sciences and *The Furman Advantage* can help people branch out and change their lives for the better.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Quandarius Weems '19 is a communication studies major and is minoring in women, gender and sexuality studies. He is a member of the football and track teams.