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A Second Sunrise

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THE LAKE was a popular viewing area for the eclipse. This photo composite captures the dimensions of the day as the moon gradually dimmed the sun's rays.

A SECOND SUNRISE

**THOUSANDS FLOCK
TO FURMAN TO SHARE
ECLIPSE EXPERIENCE**

By John Roberts



For just a brief moment in time, it seemed, Furman was the center of the Upstate solar system as more than 14,000 people spilled onto the 750-acre campus August 21 to witness a celestial marvel, a total solar eclipse.

With small children and blankets in tow, they picnicked around the lake, strolled along the tree-lined walkways, shrugged off the swaddling humidity and soaked up the once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Most chose to congregate in Paladin Stadium where Furman President Elizabeth Davis introduced Physics Professor David Moffett who provided a lighthearted yet educational 40-minute commentary from the south end zone.

“This is the largest class I have ever taught!” he exclaimed shortly after being introduced.

With the skill of a seasoned showman, Moffett orchestrated an atmosphere of suspenseful anticipation while offering up entertaining snippets of astronomy.

“The eclipse is near St. Louis,” he proclaimed at 2:18 p.m.

“It’s over Nashville!” he said at 2:28 p.m.

At 2:36 p.m., when just a sliver of a sun crescent was visible behind the moon, the Paladin Regiment delivered “2001: A Space Odyssey.”

And then it happened.

For two minutes the sun, moon and earth aligned perfectly. And so did the collective consciousness of the crowd. Necks craned, all gazed to the heavens and briefly bathed in a glorious moon shadow.

With the twilight song of insects filtering from the nearby woods, the shadows seemed sharper. The horizon glittered with pink. Squeals of delight and gasps filled the cooling afternoon stadium air. In wonderment, many clasped their hands. Others cried. Some embraced.

The eclipse was, by far, the most publicized event in Furman history. Traffic on the university’s social media platforms rocketed up more than 300 percent for the day. From coast to coast, more than 168 media outlets mentioned Furman.

“Through the years, we have had many events that have received a lot of local and regional attention,” says Vince Moore, the university’s media relations director since 1982. “But the eclipse generated more national attention for Furman than any other since I have been here.”

It was likely the second-most-attended non-athletic event in Furman history. The top spot may go forever unchallenged by an August 14, 1990, concert by New Kids On The Block. The university added 12,000 field seats in Paladin Stadium that day, and 28,000 attended the sold-out concert by the Boston-bred, boy band.



Lying on the ground or standing on it, the view of the eclipse was clear and spectacular. Physics Professor David Moffett provided a running commentary throughout the event.

The west-facing visitor's stands were a very popular viewing location.



Although Furman's eclipse event was free (the university did not even charge for parking), many in Greenville profited from the boom. More than 9,000 rooms in and around the city were slammed booked, and officials said the economic impact of the eclipse was just north of \$12 million.

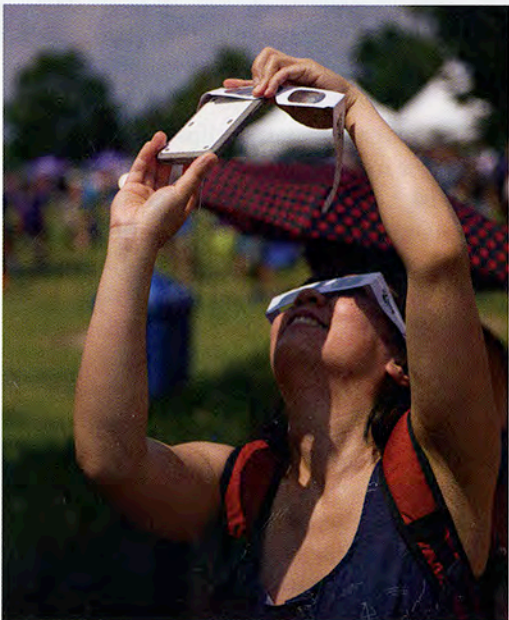
About 100,000 crammed into the city to view the eclipse. Some drove in from Charlotte and Atlanta, cities that were just outside the total eclipse 70-mile-wide band. But many more came from all over.

On a whim, Chris Davidson and his friend Andrew Wiemken left Philadelphia at 5 p.m. on Sunday, the day before the eclipse. Greenville was the shortest distance, they said. And Furman offered a buffet of ancillary activities that focused on public health, fitness and climate science.

"I heard about this on a podcast, and I had to come," said Davidson, a financial services marketer. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime event." Both left hours after the event and reported to work the next day.

Rob Lamb, a banker from Austin, Texas, and his girlfriend, Delia Correa, drove 17 hours to view the eclipse. With nary a room available in Greenville, the couple booked a room in Asheville. Furman was recommended as a viewing sight by a fellow lodger.

"Furman has done a really great job with this," said Lamb as Timbuk 3's "The Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades" blared from a nearby speaker. "This is my first time here. It is absolutely beautiful." ●



The viewing was better from the visitor's stands. The gathering was among the most attended events in Furman history.



DAVID SIGLIN | JEREMY FLEMING

More than a decade in the making

Astronomer and author returns to campus to reunite with friends and family

BY JOHN ROBERTS

Perhaps no one looked forward to the solar eclipse with greater anticipation than Guy Ottewell.

And few travelled farther to see it. A freelance writer and world-famous astronomer, Ottewell traveled from Greenwich, England, to see the event. As a Furman guest of honor, he had one of the best seats in the house—the Bell Tower peninsula.

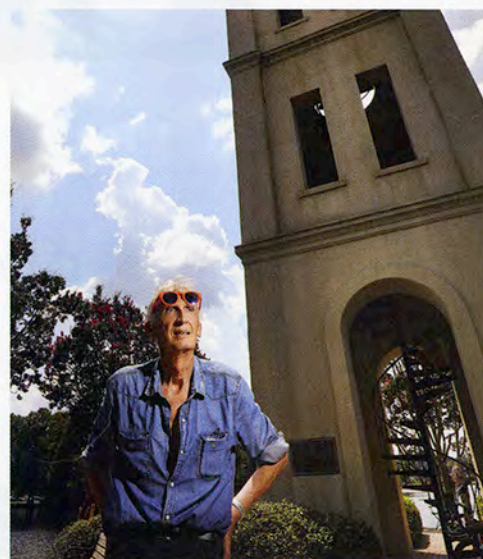
The trip was a homecoming, and Ottewell has had the date circled for 16 years. From 1973 to 2001, he kept an office in Plyler Hall and was a bit of a campus oddity as he was not a faculty member or university employee.

He used the space to produce the *Astronomical Calendar*, an annual publication that was crammed with charts, sketches and essays on celestial events. The work, published 1974–2016, brought Ottewell international acclaim among the astronomy community. Oftentimes, visitors from disparate parts of the world would stop by Furman to meet him.

After 43 editions, Ottewell, now 81 and living in a house on the shore of the Thames River, retired the calendar last year. Its circulation was about 24,000.

A Renaissance man, Ottewell's interests extend beyond the stars. He is an artist (see pg. 65), poet, a student of languages (among them Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian and Hebrew), and was educated in the classics at King's College School in Wimbledon, studied Middle Eastern languages and history, then archaeology and anthropology, at Pembroke College in Cambridge, taught in a school in Arab Jerusalem, and catalogued books in Middle Eastern languages for the libraries of Manchester University and UCLA.

Even more remarkable, his knowledge of the stars is entirely self-taught. It was sparked in the late 1960s while he was work-



ing at a school on a Navajo Reservation. The Arizona sky was ideal for star-gazing, and Ottewell began researching Navajo star-lore.

A world traveler, Ottewell has observed 15 solar eclipses. He has traveled to Canada, Mongolia, Indonesia, India, the Caribbean Islands and Kenya to witness and marvel.

An avid cyclist and quiet conversation-
alist with a crisp English accent and wispy gray hair, Ottewell strikes a distinctive figure. He made many close faculty friends during his time on campus. Some of them, including Bill Brantley, Gil Allen, Maurice Cherry and Sofia Kearns were there to see him Aug. 21.

But the event was special in another way, too.

Ottewell's son, **Roland '88**, was there with his wife, Karen, and they brought their daughter.

"This is my granddaughter Madeline," said Guy Ottewell beaming and nodding to the blonde-haired little girl. "And I have just met her. And today is her one-year birthday!" ●