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Up Close: Moving the Needle

Ron Wagner '93

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UP CLOSE

Moving the Needle

McClarty leads recruiting efforts in Baltimore area.

As President and CEO of Maryland's Howard County Chamber of Commerce, Leonardo McClarty '96 gets to fulfill an ambition for shaping and improving communities through public and private partnerships, an interest he developed as a political science major at Furman.

He also gets to do something else: live below the Mason-Dixon Line again.

After a brief stint in York, Pennsylvania, as the city's director of economic and community development, it was a bonus for the Georgia native when he took the job nearly three years ago—even if the outskirts of Baltimore barely count.

"I guess technically I'm in the South, although it doesn't really feel like it," he says with a laugh.

Leaving a family that has lived in the Atlanta area for generations was difficult, but the opportunity is what McClarty had been working for since he was an undergraduate. A pair of courses

taught by Furman Political Science Professor Glen Halva-Neubauer exposed him to urban studies, and from that point "it was always a goal to be a director of economic development or to run a chamber," McClarty says.

McClarty went on to earn a master's degree in city planning from Clemson University, where he realized he was "fascinated about why certain communities prosper and others don't." Barely a year after landing his first job as a project manager for DeKalb County in Georgia, McClarty was named the president of the DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce at 31.

"One of the things that I enjoy about my job is I feel like I'm making a difference," he says. "In the end, it's that feeling that I'm moving the needle."

Difficult to find on his impressive professional bio is that McClarty was an outstanding college football player and hosted a weekly two-hour radio show on WPLS, the campus radio station. ●

— by Ron Wagner '93

humanitarian assistance, **Jessie Cochran** is a logistics officer with the World Food Programme (a United Nations agency) in South Sudan.

Allen Mendenhall's newest book, *Of Bees and Boys: Lines from a Southern Lawyer* (Red Dirt Press), was released in June. Allen is the associate dean and executive director of the Blackstone & Burke Center for Law and Liberty at Faulkner University and is the author of *Literature and Liberty: Essays in Libertarian Literary Criticism* (2014). He has been featured in publications such as *Forbes*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *Newsweek*, and has appeared on the BBC World News, Al Jazeera, and Alabama Public Television. He has a monthly show on Fox News Affiliate WFPA 1400 AM and is editor of the *Southern Literary Review*.

2006

Patrick Arnett recently purchased a dental practice located in Greenville, South Carolina. He maintains a teaching position with the Veteran's Affairs hospital in Augusta, Georgia, where he mentors residents in implant dentistry.

2008

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