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Kirk Karwan: Creative Distruption and Innovation

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Faculty Tributes

At the close of the 2016–17 academic year, Furman said farewell to three faculty members who have worked at Furman for a combined 82 years. As a tribute to the retirees, we asked their former students and colleagues to comment on their careers and contributions.



BILL PRINCE

*Dazzling Teacher,
Thoughtful Advisor*

I came to know Bill Prince in many capacities over my time at Furman, first as my advisor, then as my modern languages professor, mentor and co-author, but most importantly as a friend. I would like to address his exceptional skills in each of these areas.

As a teacher, Dr. Prince was not only passionate and exceptionally thorough,

but also lighthearted. I remember taking Advanced Spanish Oral and Written Expression with him, a course that became one of my favorites and set me on the path to a doctorate in Spanish linguistics and a career as an applied linguist and professor. At the time, I had already begun to drop by Dr. Prince's office on a regular basis with a variety of questions related to the structure of Spanish. In those meetings, I gained a sense of Dr. Prince's depth of knowledge on the subject as well as his sense of humor.

I suspect nearly all of Dr. Prince's students would characterize him as a dazzling teacher. But in my view, what set him apart from other exceptional educators was his unique ability to guide me in my interest in language and linguistics through thousands of small acts of academic wisdom and kindness, including selecting materials for additional study, seeking out accessible academic articles for us to read and discuss and serving as a mentor as I researched and applied to graduate programs in Spanish.

As a junior, I had the opportunity to translate a book from Spanish to English, facilitated by Dr. Erik Ching, professor of history, and with the help of Dr. Prince.

As in all our interactions, Dr. Prince's approach was characterized by thoughtful guidance as he let me take the lead on the project. I provided initial drafts of the chapters, and we would subsequently meet to work through them together, at times spending an entire afternoon on a paragraph or even a single sentence.

I often think back to the skill with which Dr. Prince was able to deliver precisely the right guidance, in the right amount and at the right time. I think back to the jokes and the plays on words that revealed both his incredible wit and mastery of the Spanish language. These are the qualities that distinguished Bill Prince over his 37-year tenure at Furman University and the qualities I strive to emulate in my own work as an educator.

This short tribute is far less than Bill Prince deserves, but I hope he realizes the tremendous impact he has had on me and countless other students over the years.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charles Nagle '09 received his Ph.D. in Spanish linguistics from Georgetown University. He is an assistant professor of Spanish at Iowa State University.



KIRK KARWAN
*Creative Disruption and
Innovation*

Kirk Kawan came to Furman in 2005 after spending 19 years at the University of South Carolina. He was excited to be at a smaller university that focused on providing students with a broad education in liberal arts and sciences.

In addition to leading the newly formed Department of Business and Accounting as its chair, he quickly became involved in Furman's sustainability initiatives and study away. His belief that our students needed a world view from both an environmental and

cultural perspective, led to the creation of a course in sustainable corporations and in study away opportunities that exposed students to organizations and cultures across the globe.

From May Experiences in New York City, China, Singapore and Malaysia, to the internship program in Brussels, Kirk treasured the time he spent with students outside of the traditional classroom. He never seemed to tire of thinking about the next opportunity for enriching the education of our students.



BRUCE BROWN

Providing Emotional Support and Educational Guidance

Bruce Brown's willingness to continually invest in his students' growth during his 33-year tenure at Furman is one of his greatest assets as a professor and mentor. Within the classroom, Dr. Brown taught a broad portfolio of courses in macroeconomics, growth theory, money and banking, financial institutions, business finance and personal

finance. Beyond Furman's campus, he facilitated study away programs in Brussels, Edinburgh and the British Isles that exposed students to the vibrant cultures and complex histories of these places. Most importantly, Dr. Brown has remained a steadfast presence in the lives of his students well after they complete his courses.

As members of the Brussels study away trip led by Dr. Brown in the fall of 2010, we had an opportunity to benefit from his intellectual curiosity, thoughtful mentorship and wry sense of humor. Many of our favorite memories from the trip center on the weekly check-ins hosted by Dr. Brown and his wife, Dr. Lynne Shackelford (professor of English). As we all crowded together into their living room, Dr. Brown and Dr. Shackelford would encourage us to share our experiences from the previous week. Together we discussed readings from our courses on European history and politics, shared stories from our internships and exchanged tips on our favorite travel destinations.

After our semester in Brussels came to an end, Dr. Brown and Dr. Shackelford helped our study away cohort stay connected by graciously welcoming us into their home to reminisce and share updates on our transitions back into campus life.

Several months later, when Fiona Bloom lost her father to cancer, she

was touched but not surprised when Dr. Brown and Dr. Shackelford attended her father's wake. Their willingness to drive hours to demonstrate their support during one of the toughest periods of Bloom's life is something she can never forget. After a heartbreaking summer, Dr. Brown and Dr. Shackelford's willingness to be present for Bloom and her family helped make her transition back to Furman possible.

At many happier occasions in later years, including Bloom's wedding, Dr. Brown has continued to serve as a source of support and guidance. In short, while Dr. Brown's professional accomplishments are impressive, perhaps the highest compliment we can bestow is this: He always shows up for his students.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The authors are both 2012 graduates living in Washington, D.C. Robin Lewis is a research analyst and associate fellow at the Brookings Institution. Fiona Bloom is an associate at Booz Allen Hamilton.

Two of Kirk's greatest legacies at Furman may be his leadership in the development of what is known as The Block, which meshed accounting, finance, marketing and operations into a single semester-long course, and his tireless efforts in making the analytics lab a reality.

His vision of making Furman's business and accounting programs excellent and enviable included the transformation of the business curriculum and the building of relationships with stakeholders who, through their

generosity, made the Business Analytics Lab a reality.

Kirk envisioned a program of study for the business major that would be recognized as unique, rigorous and grounded in the liberal arts and sciences. He always informed students on the first day of the block that "we are taking you out of college for a semester" as fair warning of the rigor facing them for 20 hours each week.

Now, the program is highly regarded by employers and graduate schools seeking Furman students. And its suc-

cess is the result of the creative disruption and innovation that Kirk brought to the department over a decade ago. Kirk was a wonderful colleague, mentor and teacher. Although we will miss his sense of humor, his creative energy and his dedication to Furman students, we wish him well in retirement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Suzy Summers is chair and a professor of Furman's Department of Business and Accounting.