A funny thing happened on the way to Townes Center

Furman University

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That’s Carl Kohrt’s devotion to Furman in a nutshell. If it benefits Furman, then it’s what we have to do. Like giving a million dollars to get the ball rolling during a Trustee meeting. And being quick to point out that he’s one of many donors who gave millions of dollars to move Furman ahead. Acknowledging right away that the success of the campaign is dependent on hundreds, thousands, of people.

“The Rinkers and the Patricks have given millions of dollars. The Trones and the Hills have given many millions of dollars. But when we were talking about the Townes Center, up to the point in the Trustee meeting where I pledged my gift, there just hadn’t been a lot of movement.” He pauses, considering. “We really just needed a catalyst. My wife, Lynne, and I, we were that catalyst.”

It was during that meeting that Don Lineback, then Vice President for Development, pulled Kohrt aside and said what he thought they needed was for someone to trigger the interest in giving, and would he and Lynne considering being that trigger. Kohrt didn’t hesitate. “Of course we would. And when we went back into the meeting Don said something like, ‘A funny thing happened on the way to the forum’ or something of that nature. And then everything sort of fell out from there.” Maybe literally.

And thus began the road to lore that may or may not be true. But it makes a better story if it is.

#WhyFurmanMatters

My serving as interim President is probably the best illustration of how much Furman matters to me. I dropped it all to serve a need that Furman had.

—CARL KOHRT ’65, PH.D.
Campaign Launch Event—October 25, 2007

The Townes Center for Science major donors

The Duke Endowment
Leighman H'04 and Dave Rinker
Marshall E. Rinker Sr. Foundation Inc.,
Lynne and Carl '65 Kohrt
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Al Childers '80
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Jeanette and John Cothran '54
Jane Allee Rice '43 and Norman Rice*
Connie* and Bill Timmons* '49

* Deceased

(Clockwise, from top left) In full finery and splendor, Director of Student Activities Scott Derrick '88 interviewed guests on the red carpet as they arrived at Timmons Arena. Marie Code, Trustee, served as Master of Ceremonies. The Furman University Jazz Ensemble entertained the gathering. Nearly 500 people attended the Campaign Launch. Trustee and Parent Leighman Rinker H'04, spoke on the influence of family support at Furman. Harry Shucker, '66, Ph.D., long-standing Vice President for Student Life at Furman, and his spouse Pam Burgess Shucker '69 (the Harry Shucker Center for Leadership was established with funding during the campaign).