6-1-2013

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Furman University

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Recommended Citation

Available at: https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol56/iss2/14
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AS IS TRADITIONAL AT FURMAN, the 2013 Commencement featured the presentations of the A. E. Furman, Jr., and Janie Earle Furman Awards for Meritorious Teaching and Advising. The advising honorees were Nelly Hecker, professor and chair of education, and John Wheeler (far right), professor of chemistry. John Shelley (second from left), who was influential in establishing Furman’s poverty studies minor and retired this year as professor of religion (page 17), and A. Scott Henderson, professor of education, received the teaching awards. Henderson is only the third professor in Furman history to win both the teaching and advising awards, joining Charles Brewer, William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of Psychology, and Tom Cloer, professor emeritus of education. Henderson received the advising award in 2002.

To recognize the winners, we feature representative quotes from letters, submitted by former or current students or colleagues, nominating each of them for their respective awards.

NELLY HECKER (joined faculty in 1979): “The capstone requirement of our teacher education program is the teaching internship. For many years Nelly supervised elementary candidates during their internships... the supervisor has to be prepared to offer ongoing encouragement and assistance, which includes observing the intern and modeling appropriate teaching strategies. Nelly has not only done these things, but she has proven to be a vital source of emotional support for teaching interns as they embrace one of the most stressful stages in their preparation as educators.”

JOHN SHELLEY (joined faculty in 1980): “I was inspired by his dedication and true care and respect for the subject, and I looked forward to his class every day. He developed my slight interest in poverty into a completely new viewpoint on society, [and he influenced] my decision to pursue a minor in poverty studies and a career that is aware of social justice and equality. He always sees the best in his students, and he truly believes in what he teaches and who he teaches.”

A. SCOTT HENDERSON (joined faculty in 1998): “Awards and recognitions cannot serve as adequate measures of Dr. Henderson as a teacher, a man, a friend or a colleague. His legacy will be his students, their pursuit of knowledge, their professionalism, their commitment to the excellence that he continues to instill in them. Academically, personally and socially, my Furman experience has been significantly shaped because of this professor, his love of subject, his concern for students and his enthusiasm for teaching.”

JOHN WHEELER (joined faculty in 1991): “He was not my ‘official’ advisor during my days at Furman, but he has been my most valuable touchstone for guidance and advice over the last 15 years. When I faced a tough choice between attending graduate school and medical school, John was there with wise counsel. When I looked for ideas and inspiration for teaching, John was gracious in his ideas and strategies. When I had questions related to career paths and life in academia, he was my valued confidante. Stated simply, John Wheeler embodies the best of academic advising. He stands out as one of a kind.”