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Daniel Mickel gift bolsters Furman United program

WHEN THE UNIVERSITY launched the Furman United program in 2009 to assist students who had encountered economic hardships because of the recession, alumni and friends donated more than $800,000 over a two-year period. The funds were distributed to 116 students with extenuating financial circumstances.

Now, with the help of a $300,000 award from the Daniel Mickel Foundation of Greenville, the university will be able to extend the reach of Furman United and establish a permanent endowed fund to ensure ongoing support for students facing financial difficulties. The award is a matching challenge gift to encourage others to support the program.

Kate Shinn Howell ’79, a trustee of the foundation, says, “We want students to be as financially unencumbered as possible so that there are fewer obstacles to their success. We are very excited about backing this effort, particularly because it offers so many ways to contribute and provide assistance for these students.”

The Daniel Mickel Foundation has a long history of support for Furman, including recent gifts to the Center for Vocational Reflection (Lilly Center) and the Heller Service Corps. The Daniel and Mickel families’ generosity is recognized on campus in the dining hall and chapel, both named for Charles E. Daniel; the Honored Micold Daniel Museum Building; and the Minor Herndon Mickel Tennis Center. Charles Daniel founded Daniel Construction Co., which built much of the campus. Upon her death in 1992, his wife, Honored Micold Daniel, bequeathed more than $55 million to 14 colleges and universities. Furman received approximately $24.5 million in property and financial assets, including White Oaks, now the president’s home. The Daniel’s nephew, Buck Mickel, and his wife, Minor, maintained the family tradition of support for Furman. As chair of the board of trustees in the early 1990s, Minor Mickel provided steady leadership during Furman’s separation from the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

Honoring influential mentors

THE FURMAN STANDARD is a new program designed to advance the university’s tradition of exceptional teaching and mentoring. Donors pledge $25,000 in honor of an influential professor or administrator, and the contributions are pooled into a fund that provides support for research, materials, training and other opportunities to help faculty and staff remain mentors in their fields.

The program has gotten off to a roasting start. The first Furman Standard dinner, for donors and those they honored, was held this fall, with 19 current and former professors comprising the inaugural class of honorees.

They are: Don Aues, political science; John Block, history; Dan Feda, music; Kathy Holcombe Cochran, music; Robert Crapps, religion; Fred Cummins, accounting; J. Carlyle Ellett, economics; Ron Friis, Spanish; Ernest Harrill, political science; Linda Iuliano, English; Baby Morgan, music; Ray Niemeyer, computer science; Ray Roberts, economics; Low Stretton, biology; Laura Thompson, biology; Bridging; Bingham Vick, music; Ray Wylie, mathematics; and Shusuke Yagi, Japanese/Asian Studies.

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Linell Jackson

Honorees included Shusuke Yagi (top left), Ron Friis, and music professors (left to right) Baby Morgan, Bingham Vick, Kathy Holcombe Cochran and Dan Boda. Photo by Jeremy Fleming.

Anderson’s journey: From turmoil to triumph

LINEBACKER KADARRON ANDERSON finished his college football career in 2012 with an impressive list of accolades. He led the Southern Conference with 111 tackles, and his 372 career tackles rank him 13th in Furman history. He was a three-time All-America and all-conference performer, and he was team captain his final two seasons.

But a coach saw him on the playground one day, during middle school and invited him to play football. Once Anderson channelled his anger into football, things changed dramatically. He loved it from the beginning and soon began playing every sport he could. Sports became a way to keep his mind on anything but his circumstances and gave his life valuable direction.

Things continued to improve, and Anderson actually had the opportunity to leave Connie Maxwell at age 13 and return to his parents. But he decided to stay. “It was home for me at that point,” he says.

He became a good student and an athlete of the highest order. He played six positions on the Emerald High football team and was a region- and all-state. He averaged 17 points and 9.2 rebounds in basketball as a senior.

Major football colleges came calling early — among them South Carolina, Clemson, Georgia and Georgia Tech — but an elbow injury at the end of his junior year kept him out of summer camps, and their interest cooled. It was then that Furman entered the picture.

Anderson says that Steve Wilson, Furman’s linebackers coach at the time, came to watch him play basketball — and a full scholarship offer soon followed. “He told me he had never had a linebacker who could dunk,” Anderson says, smiling.

His enrollment at Furman provided a rallying point for the family that had unraveled a decade earlier. His mother, with whom he had reconnected in 8th grade, came to every home game, as did his brother and sisters, numerous cousins, and Rev. Murphy. “You could say that my playing at Furman really brought the whole family together again,” Anderson says.

One way or another, the 6-1, 234-pound Anderson hopes he is not through with football. He planned to move to Charlotte in January and begin training for the professional football combines in the spring. If pro football isn’t in his future, he wants to get into coaching.

But wherever he is ultimately headed, the journey gets less difficult each day.

— VINCE MOORE

The author is director of news and media relations at Furman.

For the record

In addition to Kadarron Anderson, Paladin cornerback Ryan Steed ’12 and tight end Colin Anderson ’13 were All-America honorees for 2011. Both made four All-America teams, and Steed was invited to play in January’s Senior Bowl.

Walker Zimmerman ’15 was named to Soccer America’s All-Freshman First team, Zimmerman, a defender, was the Southern Conference Freshman of the Year and NSCAA All-GCAA All-American. Zimmerman was named the ACCA Player of the Year, and Doug Allison’s soccer team was presented the ACCA Award by posting a 3.0 grade point average as a team. On the women’s side, Olivia Hibbitts ’12 gave Furman a sweep of league Player of the Year honors . . .

Former men’s tennis coach Paul Starga was to be inducted into the conference’s Hall of fame March 1. Scarpa retired last summer as the women’s coach. NCAAMAC men’s tennis with 83 victories (187.1 in his 45 years at Furman). His teams won 17 MAC regular-season and six conference tournament titles. He is named coach of the year nine times. He joins Frank Selvy ’54 (basketball) and Museq Durrani ’70 (tennis) as Furman’s representatives in the league’s shrine . . .

At the close of the fall season, the Furman men led in the race for the conference’s Commissioner’s Cup, given to the year’s most successful men’s athletics program, and the women were third in the Germann Cup competition. The men’s soccer, football and cross country teams all finished in the top four in their league standings, and the cross country team’s national outdoor championship propelled the women into contention.

Visit www.furmanpaladins.com for the latest news on Furman athletics.

Visit www.furmandickmicklefoundation.org for more information on the Furman United program. Visit www.becausefurmanmatters.com or contact susan.brady@furman.edu to learn more about Furman United.