Honoring influential mentors

Furman University

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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.

Katie Shire Howell ’99, 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 access for these students.”

The Daniel Mickel Foundation has a long history of support for Furman, including recent grants to the Center for Vocational Education (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 Miceld Dance Music Building, and the Minor Herndon Mickel Tennis Center.

Charles Daniel founded Daniel Construction Co. in 1958, the same year his wife, Honored Miceld Daniel, died. Her memory is kept alive by an endowed scholarship. Sons Stephen and Minor Daniel Jr. serve as business administrators.

Anderson’s journey: From turmoil to triumph

LINEBACKER KADARRON ANDERSON finished his college football career in 2011 with an impressive list of accolades. He led the Southern Conference with 111 tackles, and his 327 career tackles rank him third 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 won’t stay 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 Conway Maxwell at age 13 and return to Rock Hill. But he decided to stay. “It was home for me at that time,” 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 All-region and All-state. He averaged 17 points and 9.2 rebounds in basketball as a senior. Mayor 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 10th grade, came to every home game, as did his father and his three sisters. He became a good student and an athlete of the highest order. He played six positions on the Emerald High football team and was All-region and All-state. He averaged 17 points and 9.2 rebounds in basketball as a senior. Mayor 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.

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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 10th 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 son of 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 combine in the spring. If pro football isn’t in his future, he wants to get into coaching. Wherever he ultimately heads, the journey gets less difficult each day.

— VINCE MOORE

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

Honorific 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 leaders in their fields.

The program has gotten off to a flying start. The first Furman Standard dinner, for donors and those they honored, was held this fall, with 18 current and former faculty members among the honorees.

Honorees included: Shusuke Yagi (top left), Ron Friis, and music professors (left to right) Ruby Morgan, Bingham Vick, Kathy Holcomb Cochran and Dan Bolda. Photos by Jeremy Fleming.

For the record

In addition to Kadarron Anderson, Paladin cornerback Ryan Steed ’12 and tight end Colin Anderson ’13 won All-America honors 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 his teammates Matt Gehringer and Michael Anderle were All-Conference First Team by Soccer America, the Men’s Soccer Coaches Association of America and the South Atlantic Soccer Coaches Association of America. Zimmerman was named to the Men’s Soccer Coaches Association of America All-America 2nd Team. "I think he’s been consistent all year, and his play has put us in a position to play in the national championship,” head coach Mike Jeffries said.

Men’s soccer, which finished the season as Furman’s most successful program, was named the 2011 South Atlantic Soccer Coaches Association of America Team of the Year by the Men’s Soccer Coaches Association of America.

Former men’s tennis coach Paul Starga was selected to be inducted into the Southern Tennis Hall of Fame. Starga, who coached the NCAAs conference tennis team for 38 years, retired in early 2011. He planned to move to Charlotte in January and begin training for the professional football combine in the spring. If pro football isn’t in his future, he wants to get into coaching. Wherever he ultimately heads, the journey gets less difficult each day.

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