Anderson's journey: From turmoil to triumph

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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 ’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 grants 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 Homewood Mickel Daniel Music Building, and the Minor Herndon Mickel Tennis Center. Charles Daniel founded Daniel Construction Co., and the Minor Herndon Mickel Tennis Center was opened in 2001.

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 leaders in their fields.

The program has gotten off to a rousing start. The first Furman Standard dinner, for donors and those they honored, was held this fall, with 15 current and former professors comprising the inaugural class of honorees.

They are: Don Ansu, political science; John Block, history; Dan Feuda, music; Kathy Holcomb Cohran, music; Robert Crapps, religion; Fred Cummins, accounting; J. Carlyle Blett, economics; Ron Fris, Spanish; Ernest Harrell, political science; Linda Julien, English; Baby Morgan, music; Ray Niemeyer, computer science; Ray Roberts, economics; Low Strickler, biology; Laura Thompson, biology; brigade; Bingham Vick, music; Ray Wolfe, mathematics; and Shumiko Yagi, Japanese/Asian Studies.

To learn more about Furman United, contact john.kemp@furman.edu.

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 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 South Carolina. 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 named all-region and all-state. He even 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 was followed. “He told me he had never had a linebacker who could dunk,” Anderson says, smiling.

His enrollment at Furman provided a shining point for the family that had unraveled a decade earlier.

His mother, with whom he had reconnected in 5th 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 helped 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 as 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 whenever 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 Kadarion Anderson, Paladin cornerback Ryan Stand ’12 and tight end Collin 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 Atlanta United National Soccer Coaches Association of America All-America pick. Teammate Colton Hernandez was named to the College Soccer Player of the Year, and Doug Allison’s squad was named to the NSCAA Academic Award by posting a 3.0 grade point average as a team. On the women’s side, senior Olivia Wehlmüller was named to the NCAA Women’s Soccer POTY Award.

Former men’s tennis coach Paul Staria was to be inducted into the conference’s Hall of Fame March 1. Staria retired last summer as the winningest coach in NCAA men’s tennis with 631 victories (817 in his 45 years at Furman). His teams won 51 conference titles, and he was named coach of the year nine times. He joins Frank Selvy ’44 (basketball) and Maxon Bunchy ’30 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 the league standings, and the cross country team’s second-place showing propelled the women into contention.

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