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Furman University

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Major honors awarded at close of Spring Semester

SPRING SEMESTER 2011 ended with the university's traditional celebrations, festive events and award presentations.

Scott Henderson, associate professor of education, received the Chiles-Harrill Award during the Senior Banquet in late April. The recipient, chosen by the graduating class, is a member of the faculty or staff who is considered to have had the greatest influence on the class. The winner becomes an honorary member of the class and is invited to participate in all of its future activities. Henderson has taught at Furman since 1998.

At Commencement May 7, Alester G. Furman, Jr., and Janie Earle Furman Awards for Meritorious Teaching went to Jim Edwards, Louis G. Forgione Professor of Philosophy, and Daniel Koppelman, professor of music. Edwards retired this year after 41 years on the faculty; Koppelman has taught at Furman since 1996.

The Alester G. Furman, Jr., and Janie Earle Furman Awards for Meritorious Advising went to Owen McFadden, director of recreational sports since 1985, and Onorae Rice, assistant professor of psychology, who joined the faculty in 2006.

General Excellence Awards went to Katherine Suzanne Shultz, a political science major from Hoover, Ala., and Reece Cameron Lyerly, an earth and environmental sciences major from Roswell, Ga. The Scholarship Cup for perfect 4.00 grade-point averages went to Claire Elizabeth Greenstein, a political science/German major from Clemson, S.C.; John Walter Helsel, a physics/philosophy major from Atlanta; and Rebecca Kathryn Waldrip, a math major from Chester, S.C.

Now for the rest of the story . . .

NOW THAT I'VE WIPED most of the egg from my face, here's the follow-up to "Sing Along to the Victory Song," the story that appeared as "The Last Word" in the spring magazine.

Quick recap: A friend had sent me the music to the "Furman Victory Song," written in 1942 by Fred Waring and Charles Gaynor and performed on an NBC radio show. It turns out Waring wrote similar tunes for other schools.

The song was news to me — and I've worked at Furman for 25 years, plus I'm an alumnus, plus some consider me the institutional memory, a designation I shall henceforth decline. But as a word and history guy, my curiosity was piqued by this 70-year-old composition. And since Waring, a famous choral director, wrote it, I saw it as a choral work.

In trying to uncover the story behind the music, I checked with the James B. Duke Library and the Robert J. Maxwell, Jr., Music Media Center and Library. Inquiries also went to a member of the music department staff, to a current and a former member of the choral faculty, and to a far more esteemed Furman historian than I.

The libraries had the sheet music but no other information. A few people had heard of the song but knew nothing else. I found no mention of it in the most recent university history or the history of choral music at Furman.

So I wrote up what I had and included the words, figuring someone might help fill in the blanks.

Did they ever. Less than 24 hours after the magazine hit the mail, I heard from John Beckford, vice president for academic affairs and dean who, in his former life, was a music professor and announcer for football halftime shows.

He informed me that the band has actually been showcasing the "Victory Song"



at Paladin games for, oh, about 20 years. John Carmichael, band director in the early 1990s, discovered the music in the archives and did an instrumental arrangement.

I go to lots of Furman games. I've heard the "Time for the Furman Victory Song" announcement. But I didn't make the connection, probably because it was out of context and because I was thinking "choral work." Why I didn't have someone actually play the piece, I don't know.

Thoroughly embarrassed, I prepared for an onslaught of complaints from outraged band alumni.

There was no onslaught or outrage. But a number of readers did write to express confusion, surprise and/or shock that I didn't know what song I was talking about. I felt a little better, though, after reading such comments as "We [band members] always wondered where it came from" and "We never knew it had words." And even one "I liked the article."

So apologies to all the talented musicians who probably can still play the song in their sleep. At least now we have the full story — I think. Leslie Hicken, director of bands, has graciously granted me absolution. And this fall, maybe we can do a follow-the-bouncing-ball thing on the Paladin Stadium jumbotron, and fans can sing lustily along to the "Furman Victory Song."

— JIM STEWART