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ALUMNI HAVE KEY ROLE TO PLAY IN HELPING FURMAN REACH ITS GOALS

IT ISN'T HARD TO NOTICE the excitement in the air on campus these days. In just one year on the job, President Rod Smolla has brought a new sense of energy and enthusiasm to the Furman community while creating a strong vision for the Furman of tomorrow.



As the new president of the Alumni Board, I had an opportunity to learn more about the university's developing strategic plan at the spring trustees meeting, and I was impressed with the ambitious initiatives presented by President Smolla. It quickly became apparent that he is passionate about academic excellence and about engaging students' minds and hearts to ensure that they achieve their full potential as students, citizens and leaders.

The administration, faculty, students and staff will play a leading role in achieving these goals, but it is clear that the greater Furman community, and specifically our alumni, can also play a pivotal role in the university's continued success.

Alumni often reflect on the Furman "experience," which evokes many fond memories of our college years. But sometimes, it is difficult to put our experiences into words. Nonetheless, I feel compelled to challenge each of us to share our Furman stories with others.

One of Furman's strategic initiatives is to increase the quality and diversity of the student body. The Alumni Board will be working to support this goal, and in the coming months you will hear about ways to become involved.

However, all of us can support our recruitment efforts because we are some of the best recruiters

Furman could have! By sharing our stories with prospective students and their parents, we can personalize the Furman experience and provide the insight and understanding they can't get from anyone else.

If we want Furman to continue to cultivate its special living/learning experience for undergraduates, we need to be vigilant in identifying and recruiting young men and women who possess the potential to thrive in the Furman environment. If we are willing to accept this challenge, then we can serve as role models for the next generation of Furman alumni.

Our roles may have changed since our student days, but our responsibility to the university and to the Furman community is greater than ever. I hope you will join your Alumni Association Board of Directors in being the engaged, enthusiastic supporters Furman needs us to be!

SPEAKING OF THE ALUMNI BOARD, we have welcomed eight new members for 2011–12. They are:

- **Tracy Hulseby Bond '90**, a Greenville attorney. A graduate of Mercer University Law School, Tracy is a law clerk with the U.S. District Court and has been active with Furman's Mock Trial program.
- **Kevin R. Bryant '85**, a Greenville businessman. Kevin, who played basketball at Furman, is the resident managing director of Aon Risk South Inc., a provider of risk management services, insurance and reinsurance brokerage, and human capital consulting.
- **O. Vernon Burton '69**, professor of history and director of the Cyberinstitute at Clemson University. An acclaimed scholar and Pulitzer Prize nominee, he was selected the 1999 national teacher of the year for research and doctoral universities by the

Council for the Advancement and Support of Education. At that time he taught at the University of Illinois. He has also taught at Coastal Carolina University in Conway, S.C., and, since 2010, at Clemson.

- **Chad Hardy '89**, a financial advisor with Wells Fargo Advisors in Asheville, N.C. Chad has been a member of the executive committee of Furman's Young Benefactors group and served three terms on the board of the MANNA FoodBank.
- **Jimmie Harley '58**, associate minister at Taylors First Baptist Church in Greenville, where he recently served as interim pastor. Jimmie is a longtime leader among South Carolina Baptists and has four children who attended Furman.
- **Tommy Marshall '77**, director of athletics at Marist School in Atlanta. Tommy played football during his undergraduate days. Before going to Marist in 1996, he was an assistant football coach and assistant director of athletics at Furman.
- **Leon Smith '61**, a Baptist minister from Kernersville, N.C. Leon holds a doctorate from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a former president of the North Carolina Baptist Convention and of the Association of Southern Baptist State Convention Presidents.
- **George Short '54**, a retired Greenville accountant. George, who worked with Cherry, Bekaert & Holland, is a life member of the Furman Advisory Council and a dedicated community volunteer. He is active in Presbyterian church work.

— CHRIS BROWN

The author, a member of the Class of '89, is an attorney in Greenville.