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With Eternal Things

Life on the religion beat has taken PoliticsDaily.com reporter David Gibson to some remarkable places. He’s traveled with Pope John Paul II, visited Castro’s Cuba, interviewed Mother Teresa, and worked on film projects for CNN in the Middle East. Not bad for a Plainfield, N.J., native who says he came to Furman in the late seventies “without really knowing what I wanted, where I would go, or how I would get there.”

As it turns out, the story of how Gibson arrived is one not entirely of his own making. In fact, Gibson would make an ideal poster boy for Furman’s Lilly Center for Vocational Reflection. He describes his work as a religion journalist, author and filmmaker as vocations that came about “by accident, or Providence, during a longer-than-expected sojourn in Rome in the 1980s.”

But before Rome there was Furman. Gibson says he came to Furman largely for “prosaic reasons.” He looked for a school that combined excellent academic credentials with reasonable cost, and Furman offered him a good financial aid package. Gibson jokes that he chose Furman because “Furman chose me,” but one gets the sense that more than mundane practicalities were at work.

He describes Furman as “a close-knit community that was the perfect place for me. I was coming from a small, private, all-boys school (well, until my senior year when we went co-ed — too late to develop my social skills very well). Furman was an ideal bridge to a wider world that I wanted to explore. Having spent my life in the New Jersey suburbs, the South was exotic to me in many ways, something altogether different. At the same time it turned out to be the most congenial new home I could think of.”

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After graduating in 1981 with a major in history, Gibson spent a year on Capitol Hill as an intern and legislative aide, but left looking for more
excitement than Washington could offer. He painted houses — his “petenential fallback trade” — in New Jersey for a year before embarking on a backpaking trip to Europe. At the end of his trip, truly called out for more. He decided to stay for a year in Rome, but “one year turned into five, as can happen in a place like Rome.”

While there Gibson found a gig teaching English, then landed a job as a sportswriter at The International Courier, an English language daily. He eventually went to work on an English language program at Vatican Radio, which he describes as “a cross between Catholic NPR and Armed Services Radio for the pope.”

Gibson may have chosen Rome, but shortly after he left, Rome chose him — in the form of a conversion to Catholicism in 1999. “Whether my conversion came because I was working at the Vatican or despite it, I am still working out,” he wrote in his first book, The Coming Catholic Church: How the Faithful Are Shaping a New American Catholicism. Gibson’s other Rome-related conversion, to journalism, continued to find expression when he returned to New Jersey in 1990 to work as a religion reporter at The Record in Hackensack and The Star-Ledger in Newark. Then from 2001-2009, Gibson was a freelance religion writer specializing in religion in the contemporary United States.

Discerning one’s vocation may be a spiritual endeavor, but of the list of publications that have featured Gibson’s work is any indication, following the call can have its worldly perks. His articles have appeared in the Templeton Religion Reporter of the Year Award, the top honor for analysis pieces that try to put developments in historical contexts, and the faith of Elizabeth Edwards. Gibson says he especially enjoys writing about ecclesial authority, Gibson calls for reform of ecclesial power and our culture and our politics and our social lives together, and to the creation in our society,” he says. “I can’t think of a topic that is more important to cover, and I wish the journalism industry had better sources for covering the beat, and a greater desire to cover it adequately.”

And for David Gibson, covering the religion beat has taken him to perhaps the most remarkable place of all — a place white, as theologian Frederick Buechner describes it, “one’s deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

What sparked your interest in journalism and in religion?

When I arrived in Rome I had no clear idea of what I was going to do. After teaching English for a few months, I showed up at The International Courier, bare resume in hand, and got a job doing the sports section. That’s the beauty about living abroad — the talent pool for English speakers is so shallow anyone can stand out.

A year or so later, a friend mentioned that the English language program at Vatican Radio needed someone. I protested that I was Protestant, knew little to nothing about Catholics, and had no radio training. My friend said to just remember that bishops wear purple and cardinals wear red. When I was asked that question, I got it right and got the job. The radio was a forgiving place, and the Jesuits, who operate it for the Vatican, were very generous and protective of me. My time in Rome honed my interest in religion. When I returned to New Jersey and began work as a journalist for The Record, the editors thought of me when any religion story came up. Apparently they figured that if I’d covered the pope I could write about the Dalai Lama or Southern Baptists. Little did they know. But it worked out well for me.

Having been raised, as you put it, a “Billy Graham-style Evangelical in middle-class New Jersey,” what attracted you to the Catholic Church?

The short answer is the Eucharist, which remains such a distinctive element of Catholicism and, sadly, a dividing line with many other Christians. But in the universality of the church — which I was fortunate to witness firsthand — and the powerful tradition and teaching of social justice, the history and legacy of the church fathers, the church’s intellectual and artistic engagement and, above all, the patient, humane friendship of so many Catholics that led me to the Mass.

That said, I find it interesting how much Catholicism has come to borrow from Evangelicals (and other Protestants) in recent decades, and conversely how much Evangelicals have come to embrace (or simply reframe) traditionally “Catholic” elements like ritual prayer and devotions, the wisdom of the Church Fathers, and social justice teachings. Not that I’d consider “Pentecostal!” But the evangelicism I grew up with seems much different than today’s evangelicism.

What does it mean for you to describe your work as a vocation?

I like the idea of vocation in all things. It conveys the idea that everything we do should be congruent with who we are and what we are here for. Becoming Who You Are is the role of a book by a Jewish friend of mine. It reflects, I think, the necessity of discovering one’s true self and true passion not as some exercise in self-indulgence, but as a way of fulfilling a constructive role in the community and the world. That isn’t necessarily about some divine flash of light illuminating a path forward. God makes whom we are, and it is a pilgrimage to discern that identity fully and to live it fully for others.

It’s not easy, and we’re always growing — at least I hope we are — but it’s gratifying.
No doubt his commitment to excellence in religion journalism stems in part from his belief in the importance of religion not only in his life, but in the world. “Religion is so central to our national identity and our culture and our politics and our social lives together, and to the division in our society,” he says. “I can’t think of a topic that is more important to cover, and I wish the journalism industry had better resources for covering the beat, and a greater desire to cover it adequately.” And for David Gibson, covering the religion beat has taken him to perhaps the most remarkable place of all—a place where, as theologian Friedrich Buechner describes it, “one’s deepest happiness and the world’s deepest hunger meet.”

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What changes do you see on the horizon for the Catholic Church?

The current pope, Benedict XVI, is not about to promote any structural changes. Vocations to the priesthood are changing. Vocations to the religious orders, laypeople, or deacons. You also have far fewer nunneries, and laypeople are operating all sorts of ministries, and 80 percent of them are women. So the optics on the ground are changing, even as the authority structure is not.

What was the most you have learned on the religion beat? Does your experience or training as a journalist affect your work on religion stories?

I would very much like to write a book about conversion—not my own, but much of the recent wave of conversions stories. I think that the story of conversion is so fascinating to see up close. It was at turns entertaining, enlightening, and an education in the unexpected. For example, when the new Pope Francis was named by Benedict, there was much speculation about what he would do and how he would act. But my day job keeps me too busy, thanks to the virtues and vices of religious folk and the persistence of our fascination with eternal things, that it’s hard to find time for much else. That’s just as well.

What role, if any, did your experience at Furman play in shaping your career?

I am a great fan of a liberal arts education, the kind of broad-based curriculum that for me is falling out of favor as young people understandably try to focus in on a career and direct their study to that one goal. Such an approach is admirable and necessary at times, but it is a shame if it prevents a college-age person from exploring all the possibilities around them. The humanities may not be a career path for everyone, but studying philosophy and art and literature and history and the like can help you enjoy and understand the journey ahead. In that sense, Furman was wonderful for me. The faculty—in particular my advisor in the history department, John Block—were very supportive and encouraging.

Tell us a bit about your current and upcoming projects.

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What is the biggest difference between a foreign correspondent and a reporter for a newspaper?

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What is the biggest difference between a foreign correspondent and a reporter for a newspaper?
I don’t see much in the way of reform on a policymaking level, but change is happening, often dramatically, at the grass roots simply because the dynamics of Catholicism are changing. Vacations to the priesthood continue to fall, especially relative to the influx of Catholics. So you have a growing number of “priest-les” running parishes in place of those in religious orders, laypeople, or deacons. You also have far fewer nuns, and laypeople are operating all sorts of ministries, and 80 percent of them are women. So the optics on the ground are changing, even as the authority structure is not.

What changes do you see on the horizon for the Catholic Church?

The current pope, Benedict XVI, is not about to promote any structural changes, but some future pope will have to face the challenges. If there are any, which is a kind of grim satisfaction. But on the religion beat the development of the story is the kind of thing media must continue to make space for and cover well, which will be an opportunity for the religion beat — and that you may give better treatment to subjects who share your religion. On the contrary, I think there is a tendency — which you have to resist — to be more critical of one’s own denomination than of other faiths. It’s sort of the way we can criticize our own families or tribe in a way “outsiders” cannot.

The other thing is that a person who is Catholic or Jewish or Buddhist or whatever can assume they know everything they need to know about a topic related to their own faith because they practice that faith. Of course you don’t, and as soon as you make such assumptions, you usually make mistakes. When I cover other faiths I think it’s especially arrogant about asking questions and getting the very right answer, because I assume I don’t know anything. That allows me — often, I hope — to write with more confidence and authority.

What role, if any, did your experience at Furman play in shaping your career?

I would very much like to write a book about conversion — not my own, but my own conversion if I were to construct something about religion and politics today. I am also working on a two-hour History Channel program on the Vatican that has some remarkable insider footage. It should air around Easter.

But my day job keeps me so busy, thanks to the virtues and vices of religious folk and the persistence of our fascination with eternal things, that it’s hard to find time for much else. That’s just as well. I should get on retreat!

Visit www.PoliticDaily.com to read David Gibson’s columns and commentaries. Karen Guch is a 2011 graduate who recently completed a Ph.D. in religious ethics at the University of Virginia. Photos by Stephen Kozlowski, including the items on these two pages that are displayed in Gibson’s home.
It is mid-June of 2008, and my fiancé Paul and I have decided to go to Savuti for the weekend. Savuti is about four to five hours north of Gaborone (the village we live in), in Chobe National Park. It is one of the most pristine, unspoiled natural wildlife areas in the world. Much of the area consists of vast fields of dry mud flats with a few rocky hills here and there, such as Leopard Hill and “rock painting hill,” where you can see 5,000-year-old paintings done by the Bushmen, the indigenous people of southern Africa.

I had visited this area before with a group of Furman students in 2007, but that was during the “wet” season. It is now the “dry” season, and it seems like a very different place. This time of year the mud of the wet season is replaced with deep sand. Paul has decided that, since I’ll soon be spending much of my life in Africa, this is a good time for me to learn to drive in the bush.

Driving in Botswana is, in general, quite challenging. Not only am I on what feels like the wrong side of the car and the wrong side of the road, but there are donkeys, goats, cows, pedestrians and taxi cabs going every which way.

On this particular morning in the bush, however, I’m doing pretty well, trundling along and thinking, “I’m driving and there are giraffes outside the window! This is pretty cool.” Even the deep sand isn’t throwing me too much; I just shift into four-wheel drive and motor through it. We make our way over hills and through some deep, sandy turns, watching for “head-banger” holes that could send Paul flying out of the car as he stands, taking pictures, with half his body out of the sunroof (almost lost him once!).

We head up to Zwei zwei Pan to find elephants. We’ve seen impalas, giraffes, wart hogs, wildbeasts and an amazing array of birds (blue-breasted rollers, horn bills, bee eaters, tawny eagles, francolins, starlings, cape turtle doves). But no “ellies” — our pet name for elephants — so we go looking.

Eventually we come across a herd of mothers and babies. But within seconds my excitement turns to panic as the large matriarch of the herd takes one look at us, shook her head angrily and flapping her large ears, trumpeted loudly. Then she starts running — full out, right for us. This behavior is out of the ordinary, as she gave very little warning. She simply moved off, looking at no one. She circled, tucked her trunk in, folded her ears back — indicating she was going for a second glance at what — toward her head, and charged toward us. Since we had stumbled across a breeding herd with young calves, perhaps she was feeling nervous and protective.

Paul immediately shouts, “Put it in reverse and go, go, go!” After one false shift into low gear, I quickly correct, find reverse and drive as fast as I can backwards down a two-tracked dirt path. All I can hear is the trumpeting of the elephant and Paul’s urgent shouts of “Gio! Gio! Gio! Go!” I punch it and keep navigating backwards through the bush, hoping not to run into a tree or stump or get stuck in the sand.

I navigate as best I can through the twists and turns and thorny bushes. The chase seems to go on forever. Finally Paul says that it’s OK to stop — at which point I realize that my heart is racing, and I think I’m going to throw up. There was no time for fear when it was actually happening, but now the fear sets in. We could have died. Who would have found us out here in the bush?

I didn’t really get to see the elephant since I was looking in the other direction, but Paul reports that she came within about three feet of the front left bumper. With her trunk tucked, ears back and head down, she fully intended to ram us.

Later that night, when I ask how scary the incident was on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being “screaming”), he says it’s hard to say. He was too busy “making a plan” about what to do when she rolled over, because he was sure she would. He claims that we came about as close as we could to disaster without being hit, and rates the event an 8.5.

The good news is that I didn’t panic, and I’m apparently a pretty good driver, particularly when going backwards in the bush while being chased by an elephant. Who knew?

The teacher and the tour guide

For as long as I could remember, I’d wanted to go to Africa. In the summer of 2007, I got my chance when, while on sabbatical, I tagged along with a Furman study abroad group to conduct research on tuberculosis. Little did I know what a life-changing trip it would be.

My research had, until this point, focused on health inequalities. Specifically, I was interested in the ways that race, ethnicity, social class and gender affected people’s health, especially in regard to access to health care. I decided to study TB cross-culturally because it is a disease of poverty that affects not only homeless people in the United States but millions in the developing world, especially those with HIV/AIDS. Getting patients to comply with and finish the months of treatment is often a challenge, and I was particularly interested in incentive programs designed to encourage patients to complete their full course of treatment.

Paul and I met on a 10-day photographic safari to Botswana that was part of the Furman group’s six-week trip. He was one of the guides.

People often ask, “Was it love at first sight?” Perhaps if it was it would make for a better story, but the truth is the first time we set eyes on each other was in a hot dusty parking lot in middle of nowhere Botswana. Our group had left Namibia before sunrise by coach, only to wait two hours in a parking lot for our guides to show up. We were late, tired and annoyed. Paul says his first impression of me was that I looked like I had just sucked on a lemon. His first impression of him? I thought, “Who’s the overgrown kid with the funny accent?” Over the trip, however, we warmed to each other, but as you might imagine, with 32 students, three faculty members (and one spouse), six guides and two cooks, there weren’t many opportunities for private conversations.

Still, what started as a couple of casual chats during the trip continued via e-mail and Skype when I returned to the States. I found him fascinating. Born in the United States, raised primarily in Europe (Germany and Austria) — his father worked for the U.S. government — he had been in Botswana for years, having joined the Peace Corps as a Bushmen development officer back in the 1970s. Since then he’d had a variety of jobs. He’d worked in conservation to prevent the dredging of the Okavango Delta by Delforts, the diamond manufacturer. He’d also coordinated a five-month motorcycle trip across the country, lived in the national parks of Botswana for two years gathering data via GPS to create maps of the park system, and been part of an upstream effort to prevent the unlawful killing of rhinos and elephants for the trade of their horns and tusks. Was this guy for real?
It is mid-June of 2008, and my fiancé Paul and I have decided to go to Savuti for the weekend. Savuti is about four to five hours north of Botswana (the village we live in), in Chobe National Park. It is one of the most pristine, unpolished natural wildlife areas in the world. Much of the area consists of vast fields of dry marula areas with a few rocky hills here and there, such as Leopard Hill and “rock painting” hill, where you can see 5,000-year-old paintings done by the Bushmen, the indigenous people of southern Africa.

I had visited this area before with a group of Furman students in 2007, but that was during the “wet” season. It is now the “dry” season, and it would make for a better story, but the truth is the first time we set eyes on each other was in a hot dusty parking lot in middle of nowhere Botswana. Our group had left Namibia before sunrise by coach, only to wait two hours in a parking lot for our guides to show up. We were hot, tired and annoyed. Paul says his first impression of me was that I looked like I had just sucked on a lemon. My first impression of him? I thought, “Who’s this overgrown kid with the funny accent?” Over the trip, however, we warmed to each other, but as you might imagine, with 32 students, three faculty members (and one spouse), six guides and two cooks, there weren’t many opportunities for private conversations.

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Eventually we cross a herd of mothers and babies. But within seconds my excitement turns to panic as the large matriarch of the herd takes one look at us, shakes her head angrily and, flapping her large ears, trumpets loudly. Then she starts running — full out, right for us. This behavior is out of the ordinary, as she gave very little warning. She simply moved off, looking at us as she ran. I cried, tucked her trunk in, folded her ears back — indicating she was going for a so-called “head-banger” — lowered her head, and charged toward us. We had stumbled across a breeding herd with young calves, perhaps she was feeling nervous and protective.

Paul immediately shouts, “Put it in reverse and go, go, go!” After one false shift into low gear, I quickly correct, find reverse and drive as fast as I can back down a two-tracked dirt path. All I can hear is the trumpeting of the elephant and Paul’s urgent shouts of “Gio! Gio! Gio! Gio!” So I punch it and keep navigating backwards through the bush, hoping not to run into a tree or stump or get stuck in the sand.

I navigate as fast as I can through the twists and turns and thorny bushes. The chase seems to go on forever. Finally Paul signals that it’s OK to stop — at which point I realize that my heart is racing, and I think I’m going to throw up. There was no time for fear when it was actually happening, but now the fear sets in. We could have died. Who would have found us out here in the bush?

I didn’t really get to see the elephant since I was looking in the other direction, but Paul reports that she came within about three feet of the front left bumper. With her trunk tucked, ears back and head down, she fully intended to ram us.

Later that night, when I ask how scary the incident was on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being “terrifying”), he says it’s hard to say. He was too busy “making a plan” about what to do when she rolled over, because he was sure she would. He claims that we came about as close as we could to disaster without being hit, and rates the event an 8.5.

The good news is that I didn’t panic, and I’m apparently a pretty good driver, particularly when going backwards in the bush while being chased by an elephant. Who knew?

The teacher and the tour guide

For as long as I could remember, I’d wanted to go to Africa. In the winter of 2007, I got my chance when, while on sabbatical, I tagged along with a Furman study abroad group to conduct research on tuberculosis. Little did I know what a life-changing trip it would be.

My research had, until this point, focused on health inequalities. Specifically, I was interested in the ways that race, ethnicity, social class and gender affected people’s health, especially in regard to access to healthcare. I decided to study TB cross-culturally because it is a disease of poverty that affects not only homeless people in the United States but millions in the developing world, especially those with HIV/AIDS. Getting patients to comply with and finish the months of treatment is often a challenge, and I was particularly interested in incentive programs designed to encourage patients to complete their full course of treatment.

Paul and I met on a 10-day photographic safari to Botswana that was part of the Furman group’s six-week trip. He was one of the guides.

People often ask, “Was it love at first sight?” Perhaps if it was it would make for a better story, but the truth is the first time we set eyes on each other was in a hot dusty parking lot in middle of nowhere Botswana. Our group had left Namibia before sunrise by coach, only to wait two hours in a parking lot for our guides to show up. We were hot, tired and annoyed. Paul says his first impression of me was that I looked like I had just sucked on a lemon. My first impression of him? I thought, “Who’s this overgrown kid with the funny accent?” Over the trip, however, we warmed to each other, but as you might imagine, with 32 students, three faculty members (and one spouse), six guides and two cooks, there weren’t many opportunities for private conversations.

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Under the large thatched roof of the open shelter, three friends — two of whom served as the I was wearing long johns under my obligatory It was an extremely cold winter morning —
the sacred space of the local tribe in Botswana.
reply: “OK, now you can ask me to marry you!”

Making it work

People often ask me if it is hard to live on two continents. I tell them that, whatever I am, I try to enjoy the moment.

When I'm in Africa, I love spending time with my husband, camping in the bush and absorbing the natural beauty and wildlife of Botswana. When I'm in the States, I enjoy spending time with family and friends (and my dog) and the ease of everyday living so contrary to where I live the other half of my life. (Have a flat tire? Call AAA. Need something for dinner? Pick up Thai takeout on the way home.) Living on two continents has made me appreciate many of the things I've taken for granted for years. When I turn on the tap in my kitchen in Greenville and clean, potable water comes out, I am grateful in a way that I never was before.

I feel fond of how Africa works that would not be possible if I visited only on occasion, and I have a feel for how Africa works that would it did in this case.

My students are often curious about how Paul and I decided to marry. I guess they find it a bit funny that, although we have always lived and worked on different continents, the long commute and lengthy separations never crossed my mind as deterrents to marriage.

Within months of our first meeting, Paul asked me to marry him. My response was that he needed to know me better before I could give him an answer. Several months later, on a camping trip to the Tsala-Kudumo Park, on the night of the hottest weather I have ever experienced, I evidently did something that led Paul to explain an explanation: “You are stubborn and difficult woman!” This man, if ever, gets frustrated, so this was a remarkable comment coming from him. I don’t remember what I did to cause such an outburst, but I remember my reply: “OK, now you can ask me to marry you!”

We were married in July 2008 at the Koye, the sacred space of the local tribe in Botswana. It was an extremely cold winter morning. — a drive that can take as long as 13 hours, one way. After Furman's graduation ceremony in May, I head back to Botswana for the summer to continue my research into cultural factors that contribute to the spread of AIDS in Botswana, which has the second highest rates in the world. Living on two continents offers other benefits, especially professionally. With Furman’s new curriculum and change to the semester system, I have had the opportunity to develop a first-year seminar on global health called “Cures, Cures and Clinics” that allows me to use my firsthand knowledge of Africa in the classroom. Talking about beliefs in witchcraft, for example, using conversations I’ve had with locals in Botswana, makes a rather unbelievable topic more believable. A recent survey in Botswana actually found that 28 percent of the population believes that HIV/AIDS is caused by witchcraft. Furman’s new calendar has also allowed for the expansion of the Africa study away program, which I have been fortunate to direct for the last three years (including this semester). The program features courses from four disciplines: sociology (which I teach), history, psychology, and religion (in 2009 and 2010), and a new focus on economics.

We begin with three weeks of preparatory work on campus, then travel to South Africa, Namibia and Botswana for approximately nine weeks. In April we return to campus for three more weeks of classes. As director, I travel with the students the entire time, and faculty representing the other courses “parachute” in for two weeks each. We are a traveling seminar that doesn’t stay anywhere for more than a week. We travel by plane, bus, van and safari vehicle, and we sleep in hotels, guest houses and tents. On several occasions during the trip, the students enjoy “home stays” with local families.

We visit diamond mines, hospitals and non-profit organizations, and engage people at community organizations and orphanages. We go to some of the most known tourist locations on the continent, including historic Robben Island (where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 26 years) and the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg. We travel to the Drakensberg Mountains and climb Table Mountain in Cape Town and the famous Dune 7 in Namibia. We see some of the most beautiful natural areas in the world — the Okavango Delta, Kalahari Desert, Victoria Falls.

It is an amazing experience, I love teaching in the real world, with all the spontaneity and creativity it affords. I love that I am constantly learning, right alongside my students. It is one thing for me to lecture on global health disparities. It is quite another to visit a rural public hospital in northern Namibia and contrast its lack of staff and supplies to the private clinic in Sowkopmund, Namibia, where Angelina Jolie gave birth to her daughter, Shiloh.

And without question, the extra time I spend in Africa makes me a better teacher. The knowledge I gain, the firsthand and not just gleaned from what I’ve read, but what I’ve lived. I have become adept at handling all that one faces when coordinating such a trip. I have a better understanding of the difficulties that some_trip’s one’s best efforts to plan. I know how to improve when the plan you devised months in advance goes awry. I have a feel for how Africa works that would not be possible if I visited only on occasion, and I’ve developed incredible patience for the process that is Africa.

I feel fortunate to work at a university that recognizes that this knowledge and skill set are unique, and that allows me to put these skills to work by directing the Africa program. It is potentially a life-changing experience for our students. The intellectual and emotional growth I observe in them each year is incredibly rewarding.

Of course, my marital arrangement does have its own set of challenges. It is especially hard to be halfway across the world when your husband is suffering from his ninth bout of malaria. Because we experience separations that last as long as 10 weeks, it is difficult not to count the days until we are reunited.

But despite the unconventional nature of my intercontinental marriage, I really love my life. I feel as if I’ve finally found the balance between the side of me that needs stability and order, and the side that craves adventure and excitement. As odd as it seems, it suits me, and I feel fortunate to have arrived at this point while working at a university that appreciates my talents — and lifestyle.

I love my husband. I love my career. I love my life on two continents. Pj

Kristy Maher has taught sociology at Furman since 1991. She is a graduate of St. Michael’s College and earned her master’s and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University. Read more about her life at http://braveshyena.blogspot.com. Photos courtesy Kristy Maher.

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I was at the University of Botswana for the summer. Family and friends who have known me for years found this a bit shocking—I am not an impulsive person. But sometimes the heart trumps the head, and I’m very thankful that it did in this case.

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I love my husband. I love my career. I love my life on two continents. P.J. Kristy Maher has taught sociology at Furman since 1993. She is a graduate of St. Michael’s College and earned her master’s and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University. Read more about her life at http://blessedbyher.blogspot.com. Photos courtesy Kristy Maher.
Like most Americans, John F. Mulholland viewed the events of 9/11 with stunned disbelief. Then, anger.

Then he began preparing.

On October 19, 2001, little more than a month after terrorists hijacked American planes and crashed them into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania, killing almost 3,000 people, Mulholland, then a colonel, was stationed at an air base in Uzbekistan, just north of Afghanistan.

Using a satellite communication link, he issued commands to a small, elite group of soldiers who, along with CIA operatives, had slipped into Afghanistan with a simple but seemingly insurmountable mission: form alliances with a loose coalition of Taliban-opposed warlords and topple the Afghan government.

Mulholland’s journey to the outskirts of Afghanistan to play a leading role in a major military success story began at Furman in the mid-1970s.

Today he’s a highly respected, three-star general in command of 21,000 soldiers. In 1974, though, John Mulholland was just another newly enrolled Furman student — and not your typical Furman student, either.

Raised in Baltimore, a hardy, working-class city, he was the oldest of six children (four of them boys) in an Irish Catholic family. His home was a boisterous hive of activity.

His father, a retired bomber pilot who served in the Korean War and was recruited to play professional football, encouraged his children to be competitive in everything they did. All of the Mulholland boys played football at Winston Churchill High School.

“We were not afraid to mix it up,” Mulholland says. “We were all very competitive, but close. If you challenged one of us, you challenged all of us.”

Mulholland, 6-5 and barrel-chested, was recruited by the University of Maryland before shattering his shoulder during his senior season. So his father, impressed with Furman’s football program, decided to send his oldest son south to attend college.

But Furman and Mulholland weren’t exactly a perfect match. His wry sense of humor, direct manner and mid-Atlantic accent did not always endear him to others.

His freshman year, however, he did find a girlfriend who later became his wife — classmate Miriam Mitchell, daughter of a Clemson University professor. And the next year he found his passion: the Reserve Officer Training Corps.
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Among students and faculty alike, Mulholland was well respected for his direct and honest approach and his sense of humor.

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Mulholland was drawn to the structure, challenge, and shared sense of purpose of ROTC cadets, and he received guidance from Furman’s military science instructors, many of whom had combat experience in Vietnam.

His junior year he fell out of favor with the football coaching staff because he missed a few classes, but he held his scholarship when he said, he chose to attend the select Army Ranger School instead of participating in football workouts. He joined the army in 1975 and served five years for a time he needed to money to fund his final year of education. “I worked on [building] Haywood Mall,” he remembers. “The left field had broken down and they needed someone strong to move the pipe.” At night he tended bar at Steak and Ale “pipe.” At night he tended bar at Steak and Ale.

After completing his degree in 1978, Mulholland was commissioned a second lieutenant and assigned to the Panama Canal Zone. Mulholland had barely settled into his new base when the United States turned its attention to Afghanistan. The Taliban, a hard-line Islamic group that had taken control of much of the country, was fighting to establish a strictly religious society. The United States and its allies, including the United Kingdom and Australia, began to take steps to counter the Taliban’s influence. Mulholland was part of a small team of soldiers that helped to support Afghan northern opposition groups.

“We were very cognizant that, in the wake of the horrendous attacks upon our country, we represented America’s response to those who did us such terrible harm.”

Through the late-1980s and early-1990s, Mulholland climbed the military hierarchy, serving at bases in the United States, Panama and Japan. At each stop he assumed more responsibilities, commanding teams, companies, battalions and then groups. In 1989, he attended the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif. (He speaks Spanish, German and Arabic.) The following year, he graduated from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kan., an officer development school.

A decade later, Mulholland was invited to attend the National War College, a training ground for top military brass. After graduating with a Master of Science degree, he and Miriam moved to Fort Campbell, Ky., where in July 2001, Mulholland took command of 5th Special Forces Group. As fate would have it, the focus of 5th Group, which included 1,300 military personnel, was the Middle East and Africa.

Mulholland had barely settled into his new position when the terrorists struck on 9/11. The events, scored into the memories of most Americans, reshaped lives and global perceptions, and propelled the country into a new decade-long war on terror.

The United States first turned its attention to the Taliban-led government in Afghanistan, which supported the terrorist group Al Qaeda. The Taliban had been driven from power in Afghanistan by a joint U.S.-led coalition forces after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

“Through the years, there were, however, a few differences. Explaining the Taliban’s strict social code that prohibits music and dancing for men, Mulholland has said, “There was a mud dash to the barber shop . . . and everyone began blaring music, all kinds of music.”

Following the success of Task Force Dagger, Mulholland commanded a United States, United Kingdom and Australian task force that conducted the initial special operations in Iraq. He also served as chief of the Office of Military Cooperation in Kabul.

In 2008 he was nominated by President Bush to be commander of the U.S. Army Special Operations, which brought him to a promotion to three-star general. Headquarters in Fort Bragg, N.C., Special Operations includes Special Forces, Rangers and Delta Force. Mulholland oversees approximately 21,000 soldiers and eight bases.

At the ceremony transferring authority to Mulholland, Adm. Eric Olson, the outgoing officer, said, “If you’ve read his bio, that says what he’s done. If you’ve spent any time with him, you know who he is. What he’s done gives us a sense of his capabilities, but who he is nails out our high level of confidence in him, that he will meet our highest expectations.”

Colleagues describe Mulholland as an intense man who cuts straight to the chase. “He is very much a politician,” says Tom Bryant, a Pentagon spokesman. “He is a very matter-of-fact person,” says Bryant. “He is a very matter-of-fact person.”

In his talk before a packed audience in Yosemite Conference Center, Mulholland painted a broad and complex portrait of the current state of affairs. Once the United States turned its attention to Iraq after 2001, he said, the Taliban and U.S. forces began to target the Taliban and al Qaeda. “We got off the war plan,” he said. “Whether we ever have an opportunity there will be debated for many years.”

The general described how the extremes of Afghan weather (brief cold, frequent sandstorms and the country’s mountainous terrain) make transportation — and finding the enemy — difficult. Adding to the problem is the country’s fragile infrastructure, as its road and utility systems (electricity, water and sewers) have been decimated by years of conflict and neglect.

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Mulholland says, “I definitely did not fit in at Furman. It was not a happy relationship, to be honest with you. I was a Furman kind of guy, sort of like fitting a square peg in a round hole. It was character training,” he laughs. “But I found Miriam there, and I lived with my teammates.”

After completing his degree in 1979, Mulholland was commissioned a second lieutenant and assigned to the Panama Canal Zone. In 1983, after graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy, he decided to make his profession the country’s feeble infrastructure, as its current state of affairs. Once the United States painted a broad and complex portrait of the enemy — different cultures, different languages, different conditions, different climates and societies — it was a challenge to what we’ve done in the past. But we’d rather bring them over to our side.”

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He added that by working in villages in an effort to earn goodwill among the Afghan people, U.S. and NATO forces are “trying to clear and hold areas so that governance can take root and improve their way of life. It is quite a challenge.”

On the political front, he said, the military and members of Hamid Karzai’s administration are searching to find those elements in the adversary coalitions to bring to the table. That is what was done in Iraq. For those who are irreconcilable, the only option for us is to kill them. But we’d rather bring them over to our side.”

In 2008 he was nominated by President Barack Obama to be commander of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, which brought with it a demand to produce_changed to from new stars._ The new starsCommander, said, “If you’ve read his bio, that says what he’s done. If you’ve spent any time with him, you know who he is. What he’s done gives us a sense of his capabilities, but who he is our high level of confidence in him, that he will meet our highest expectations.”

Colleagues describe Mulholland as an intense man who cuts straight to the chase. “He is a very matter-of-fact person,” says Lt. Col. Bryant. “He will start out with a trip to put people at ease, but after that he gets down to business. When he issues guidance, it is clear and to the point. He is not ‘The Emperor of the German Army’...”

In Horse Soldiers, Stanton described Mulholland as “massively built with an intense glare behind his eyes that could cut you in half.”

And while Mulholland’s newest days at Furman may not have been all he would have liked, the self-proclaimed “square peg” has returned to campus a number of times in recent years. He has attended ROTC’s annual commissioning ceremonies, and at Homecoming 2009 he was presented the university’s Distinguished Alumnus Award. In October, he came to Furman to deliver a Riley Institute-sponsored speech about Afghanistan.

In his talk before a packed audience in Younes Conference Center, Mulholland portrayed a broad and complex portrait of the current state of affairs. Once the United States turned its attention to Iraq after 2001, he said, the Taliban and al Qaeda began to re-emerge in Afghanistan. “Afghanistan got off the radar screen,” he said. “Whether we lost an opportunity there will be debated for many years.”

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Independent Spirit

Don Lewis has spent most of his 75 years trying to get away from it all. At least that’s what most of society would say. The problem is, not everybody has the same definition of the word “all.”

All he ever wanted could be found in the forest, in the company of his wife and animals, or in the solitude of a pottery studio he built himself, nail by nail. So that’s where he went, and that’s what he did.

You’d be hard-pressed to find a man today, in this culture lathered with objects and excess, who has more completely constructed his life on his own terms. It hasn’t always been easy, and it hasn’t always been perfect. It has, however, been unique. And good for you if you can end a visit with Lewis on his 122 heavily wooded, gently rolling acres in northern Greenville County without a little twinge of envy.

“The downside of living in the woods like this is that trees die and they start falling,” Lewis says, chuckling as he points up a hill. “That oak tree up there is jeopardizing my studio.”

As Lewis walks gingerly along a path, slowed by a painful case of sciatica, dogs McDuff and Squirt bound joyfully alongside, while Sweetie walks quietly behind, more cautious of a visitor. They are three of the dozens of homeless critters that Lewis and his late wife, Bennie Lee Sinclair, have taken in over the last five decades.

“She was a little stray out on the road for about a year, and the neighbors and I fed her but she didn’t come near anybody,” he says about Sweetie, a flat-faced, black pug mix with white whiskers that give away her age, and a stubby tail that wags when she hears her name. “I locked her in a pen for a few days and got her used to being here. She was a house dog, and probably what the situation was was Granny has a dog, Granny dies, and the kids don’t want to fool with it and throw her out.” Lewis goes on to introduce other members of his “family,” which includes another dog named Dogg and cats Blossom Dearie, who lives in the studio, and Moto, who lives in the house.

Declan Haun, a noted journalistic photographer, was a friend of Don Lewis and Bennie Lee Sinclair. He snapped this shot of the couple in the early 1960s.
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Overcoming adversity

Ah, the house. Lewis built it, starting in 1975 after he and Bennie Lee moved from their two acres in Little Chicago, near Campobello, where they’d lived for 17 years, since they were Furman students in the late 1950s.

There, they had no electricity or running water. But Lewis no longer shuns modern conveniences. He has a car and a phone, even the Internet. Call him the well-earned fruits of his labor. “When the gasoline runs out, you get the old shovel and hoe to get the potatoes dug from the ground,” he remembers.

Ironically, he thinks some of that gift came from the awful virus that paralyzed him as a child. “For a while, I wrote left-handed. I think that little experience gave me a certain dexterity in each of my hands.”

In 1957, the winter of his freshman year, Don met Bennie Lee. Shortly thereafter, he and his brother were reunited with their mother, and Lewis went on to graduate from high school and join the Marines. Nobody in his family had ever earned a high school degree, but he liked education. So after his enlistment was up, Lewis, armed with the G.I. Bill, decided to go to Furman. “I knew nothing about college, and the only college I knew of was Furman.” His life would never be the same.

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Lewis says with a smile. “But we did a lot of other things, too.”

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There, they had no electricity or running water. But Lewis no longer shuns modern conveniences. He has a car and a phone, even the Internet. Call him the well-earned fruits of his labor. “When I was a skeleton with skin on it,” Lewis says. “I was bedridden for eight months. There’s a picture of me. My mother could close her thumb and middle finger around my leg right above the knee. I was a skeleton with skin on it.”

But he recovered again and was healthy by his 12th birthday. Shortly thereafter, he and his brother were reunited with their mother, and Lewis went on to graduate from high school and join the Marines. Nobody in his family had ever earned a high school degree, but he liked education. So after his enlistment was up, Lewis, armed with the G.I. Bill, decided to go to Furman. “I knew nothing about college, and the only college I knew of was Furman.” His life would never be the same.

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Wildenhain had fled to America to escape the Nazis, but in her youth she had attained the status of master potter at the legendary Baden School in Germany, which attracted artists from all over Europe in the 1920s and ’30s. When Lewis left her studio three months later, he was ready to call himself a professional.

At that time Don and Bennie Lee were very secluded and very work-minded, and they were extremely nice to my wife Donna and me,” says Greene, longtime owner of The Potters House in Greenville. “In retrospect, he was probably my biggest mentor. There are a lot of people who don’t do it just for fun.”

Lewis long ago lost count of how many pieces he has sold. As a young man he and Bennie Lee, who also graduated in 1961, would travel all over the Carolinas, Tennessee and Georgia peddling their creations. “In those days people did that and didn’t do it just for fun.”

While Don revealed in the laurel wreath with clay between his fingers, Bennie Lee did the same with words and paper. Her dream of becoming a writer took a little longer to reach fruition, but the same year Don was honored by his alma mater, she published her first book of poetry. Sixteen years later, she was named South Carolina’s poet laureate.

Overcoming adversity

A Greenville native, Lewis talks about his childhood matter-of-factly. There is no bitterness in his voice. There also isn’t any whining.

His father abandoned his mother when he and his brother were young, and things were tough for a long time. “I was raised in a single-parent household before it became fashionable. Back then, it was quite a stigma for a woman,” he says. “My mother had a nervous breakdown after our father left, and I ended up in an orphanage. While I was there, I contracted polio. At the time, polio was a dreaded disease. It was greatly feared.”

He lost the use of his right arm, and it took extensive physical therapy to regain movement. Then life handed another blow. “After I got over the polio, I contracted rheumatic fever. I’m not sure where I was or how I did it. That starts to be a bit confusing.”

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Mutual devotion and support

Once you pass the Cleveland post office off of U.S. 276 coming from Greenville, start looking for the signs pointing you to Wilkensh Gallery. Take a left, and keep following the signs to 120 Ryan Drive, where you’ll turn right onto a one-lane gravel drive that winds its way through the forest to Lewis’ studio. He’s usually around, but it’s not he requests that you use the honor system to pay for anything you pick out from his display of pots.

“The last couple of years there have not been many [visitors], with the economic situation,” he says. “Pottery is not by any means a necessity. Before that, I’d get sometimes a couple of dozen people on the weekends just from me signs out on the road.”

Lewis long ago lost count of how many pieces he has sold. As a young man he and Bennie Lee, who also graduated in 1961, would travel all over the Carolinas, Tennessee and Georgia peddling their creations. There was never a ton of money, but there was enough. “We thought of ourselves as being gypsy potters,” he says. He also built a reputation; his work was featured at the Smithsonian and at the Faenza International Pottery Exposition in Italy. In 1972, Furman presented him its Distinguished Alumni Award.

Jeff Greene, a 1970 Furman graduate, met Don in 1969 at an exhibit at Furman. They’ve been friends ever since.

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As artists, Don and Bennie Lee pushed each other. One way, he says, “There's a certain joy in doing creative things that you can't really put a dollar value on. When she would write a poem that she was pleased with, or I would make a pot that I was pleased with, it was quite a feeling. That's nothing like it.”

Not that they used the same methods. “She and I had two different thought processes. Her thoughts were sort of like in vignettes, still pictures. And mine are always moving,” Lewis says. She “enjoyed the creative process of writing, and she really had no affinity for doing the thing by her hands except on a keybord.”

Greene was continually amazed by the strength of Don and Bennie Lee’s relationship. “Both of them had totally individual lives in terms of profession, but in terms of support I don't think I've ever known of anyone that had the support that they gave each other,” he said.

Yet their work was only a small part of their bond. Bennie Lee also came from a difficult childhood. The couple had no children and no other family to speak of, and from the day they met they knew that their time together would likely be cut short by the slow ravages of Bennie Lee’s Type 1 diabetes. It was.

“She died wasn't really hard to anticipate. She had diabetes from a young age,” Lewis says. “I've got lots of pictures of her in that wheelchairs. She was still going to writers’ conferences and things like that. It was a long process of seeing her go downhill, from being a relatively healthy person to someone who was pretty unhappy and threadbare...And she was so quiet. She was so private, and she was always beautiful, even with a lot of pain she went through.”

Lewis says he's explored nearly every inch of his property, but not likely. With winter approaching, he worries that for the first time he won't be able to cut his own firewood. “I am highly displeased with my leg,” he says. “I've always done everything, and I can't do it now.”

He can still spin the wheel, however, and fire up the kiln when he chooses. “To me, it's a matter of form. Clay is accidental Zen.” Zen: The state of total focus and togetherness. “I can't do a lot of thinking about it. I've got to do it and go on.”

As artists, Don and Bennie Lee pushed each other. “We both pushed each other,” he said. “It was the most independent thing I could do,” he says. “I had a talent for it, and I was greatly taken by it. You're totally in complete control of the process, from start to finish. You have nobody to blame if it turns out bad, but it also means that you take the credit if it succeeds. If you will, there’s a little bit of omnipotence.”

But if you manage the firing successfully, and there's the occasional disaster to keep the creator humble — when a shelf collapses and costs him three months of work, or a sleeping cat falls from the ceiling into his clay.

“Ultimately everything is confined to the fire, and all sorts of things can happen there. Sometimes happy accidents, and more often than not unhappy accidents,” Lewis says with a laugh. “It’s quite a nice feeling. The decorated phrase is that opening a kiln is like Christmas morning, but it's pretty much true. For myself, I suppose, most of the pots that I make, once I get 'em out of the kiln and get a good look at 'em, I'm through with it.”

Greene knows the feeling. “I'm probably asked about once a month if you make a good living at this, and I say no, but you can make a good life. I learned a long time ago that you have to make a choice to do things you feel a calling to do, because you do it for the fun of it, and it's very, very different.”

Greene has been asked “about a thousand times why I chose to live this kind of life,” Lewis says. “It's partly because I have responsibilities since I can remember, since I was a little kid,” he says. “I think I've pretty much met all of them, and that's a good feeling.”

“Proud may not be the right word, but I'm content. It seems like I've had responsibilities since I can remember, since I was a little kid,” he says. “I think I've pretty much met all of them, and that's a good feeling.”

For whatever reason, I have a need for peace and quiet, and the best way to do that is to be back in a hole in the wall,” he said. “There are certain things to enjoy here. Sometimes I’ll get out and listen to some great horned owls on that hillside there. In a busier environment, just the typical noises that you find in an urban situation would drown those things out. It makes me feel good.”

With that, McDuff and the gang start making it known that it's dinner time. Lewis has buried more members of his family than he cares to recall, but he knows that and they'll outline him. “They’re my friends, so they deserve to be taken care of. And if I’m not here to do it, I’ll make arrangements for it,” he says, and then pauses. “It’s strange to talk about this.”

Is Lewis proud of the life he’s chosen? “Proud may not be the right word, but I'm content. It seems like I've had responsibilities since I can remember, since I was a little kid,” he says. “I think I've pretty much met all of them, and that's a good feeling.”

Visit www.thewildwoodgallery.com to find out more about Lewis’ work. Color photos by Jeremy Fleming. To learn about another unusual aspect of Lewis’ life, turn the page.
Bennie Lee has been gone for only a while instead of 10 years. But it was necessary to keep her having some vision,” Lewis says. “She was her eyesight would deteriorate a little bit and she’d go back for more laser her sight. “She had something around 20 surgeries on her eyes, but still to someone who was pretty much completely disabled.”

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The fire still burns

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approaching, he worries that for the first time he won’t be able to cut his own firewood. “I am highly displeased with my leg,” he says. “For always done everything, and I can’t do it now.”

He can still spin the wheel, however, and trip up the kiln when the mood strikes him. He can also show you what may be his favorite creation — if you ask to see it. No, it’s not in some shiny glass case above the fireplace. Try the corner of a dusty shelf in a cramped storage closet. “I’m not real sure,” he says when asked why the bowl impresses him so. “But just all came together, the idea that I had. I can’t tell you why. It just strikes me as being a pretty good pot.”

That’s always the goal, although for an artist it’s an elusive one. “It’s accidental Zen.” Zen: The state of total focus and togetherness. It’s quite a nice feeling. There’s nothing you can put a dollar value on. When she would write a poem that she was pleased with, or I would make a pot that I was pleased with, it was quite a feeling. That’s nothing like it.”

Not that they used the same method. “She and I had two different thought processes. Her thoughts were sort of like in vestigions, still pictures. And mine are always moving,” Lewis says. She enjoyed the creative pro-
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Like all of their friends, Greene wondered how Lewis would cope

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Like a carpet of light blue ghosts in the night

When Don Lewis moved to his remote corner of Greenville County in 1975, he did it in part to keep his connection with the natural world intact. Since 1959, when still students at Furman, he and his wife, Pammie Lee Shucker, had lived in a cabin they built on two acres of catoctin timber land in Little Chicago, S.C., near the town of Campobello. But encroaching development had turned the creek that supplied their drinking water and scared away many of the animals they had called friends, leaving them searching for a newoteric.

They found it — and more — near Cleveland in northern Greenville County, just off State Highway 11.

Lewis is an acute observer of the outdoors, and during his first spring at his new home, at the base of where the Blue Ridge Mountains start climbing into North Carolina, he noticed something he’d never seen before. At the moment when the sun finally goes all the way down and the gray of dusk is replaced by the black of night, he noticed a light that shouldn’t be. Actually, hundreds of lights — pale blue and unwavering, hovering just above the ground. Trimmed, he had witnessed for the first time the mating ritual of the Phausis reticulata, a little known insect also called the “blue ghost fly.”

“I knew there was something different about them,” Lewis says. “For about 10 years I suppose I couldn’t find out anything about them. Nobody ever talk to had ever seen these things.”

Unlike the more common fireflies with blinking yellow lights that children chase during the summer, blue ghost fireflies emit a steady glow. And while not uncommon in the southern Appalachians, they aren’t seen often because they require fairly mature forests to survive and are susceptible to weather extremes.

“These guys are about half the size of a regular summertime lightning bug. They look very much the same. In good years they’ll be here for about six weeks, but that’s not guaranteed,” says Lewis, who adds that the fireflies begin to appear around April 15. “They can get killed off by certain rain events, a severe thunderstorm in the afternoon or the evening.”

Lewis’ prowess as a potter is well known, but over the past two decades the blue ghost fly has come to define his life just as much. He’s created a website (www.doiop.com/doiopforest) to document what he sees, and each spring he sends alerts to friends and interested observers so they can witness the phenomenon.

Despite their uniqueness, the fireflies haven’t been subjects of much scientific study. “What’s on my website is what I’ve been able to deduce about them over the years,” says Lewis.

Jennifer Frick-Roproh, an associate professor of ecology and environmental studies at Berea College in North Carolina, recently co-authored the third scientific paper on Phausis reticulata. “I enjoy talking to Don because he is such an enthusiast,” she says. “He makes some good observations.”

Two springs ago, Pam Burgess Shucker, then Don’s longtime friend, made the trek to Cleveland to see the fireflies. The show started promptly at dark.

She wrote of her experience, “The eerie, hauntingly beautiful blue lights began to flick on one at a time. I attempted to follow each pale blue flash through dark so complete I often bumped into the person beside me. At the end of an hour, thousands of ghostly blue lights lit the black woods as if haunted matches flared. . . . The event proved a spectacular experience and memory for me.”

She’s not alone. In recent years, more and more visitors have made it a point to brave Lewis’ twisting, one-lane gravel drive to watch the blue ghosts do their thing.

“There’s no way to know how many feedback there are going to be. I’ve seen thousands, and when there are that many of them it’s like a carpet of light,” says Lewis. “I’ve had cars parked on every possible space out there. The great fear is to have one last car come in that can’t turn around.”

Because the females don’t fly, the fireflies are difficult to find and rarely get a chance to live, which is a problem in an area where, until recent years, human encroachment was destroying their habitat at a breakneck pace. Whether that will have a long-term impact on their population remains to be seen, but Lewis is determined to ensure that Phausis reticulata will always have a home on his 122-acre homestead.

“Some friends and I formed a nonprofit corporation called Friends of Firefly Forest, and I intend to leave this place to the corporation in my will. Hopefully they’ll keep it going forever,” Lewis says. “But even if they don’t, if something should happen to the corporation and it should go out of business, the corporation or a judge, whichever one it takes, will give this place to a like-minded conservation organization. That’s the best I can do.”

— RON WAGNER

The author, a 1993 graduate, is a freelance writer in Hendersonville, N.C. A former Furman baseball player, he was the right fielder for the Asheville (N.C.) Diamonds baseball club that won second straight Men’s Senior Baseball League Fall Classic championship in Japan. Fla. The D-Bucks captured the 2010 35-over American Division championship with a 7-4 record after winning the 35-over Central Division title in 2009.

FURMAN | WINTER 2011

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When Don Lewis moved to his remote corner of Greenville County in 1975, he did it in part to keep his connection with the natural world intact.

Since 1959, while still students at Furman, he and his wife, Bonnie Lee Sinclair, had lived in a cabin they built on two acres of coveted timber land in Little Chicago, S.C., near the town of Campobello. But encroaching development had dammed the creek that supplied their drinking water and chased away many of the animals they had called friends, leaving them searching for a new terrain.

They found it — and more — near Cleveland in northern Greenville County, just off State Highway 11.

Lewis is an acute observer of the outdoors, and during his first spring at his new home, at the base of where the Blue Ridge Mountains start climbing into North Carolina, he noticed something he’d never seen before. At the moment when the sun finally passes all the way down and the gray of dusk is replaced by the black of night, he noticed a light that shouldn’t be. Actually, hundreds of lights — pale blue and unswerving, hovering just above the ground. Termed it, he had witnessed for the first time the mating ritual of the Phausis reticulata, a little known insect also called the “blue ghost firefly.”

“I knew there was something different about them,” Lewis says. “For about 10 years I suppose I couldn’t find out anything about them. Nobody’d talk to had ever seen these things.”

Unlike the more common fireflies with blinking yellow lights that children chase during the summer, blue ghost fireflies emit a steady glow. And while not uncommon in the southern Appalachians, they aren’t seen often because they require fairly mature forests to survive and are susceptible to weather extremes.

“These guys are about half the size of a regular summertime lightning bug. They lack very much the same. In good years they’ll be here for about six weeks, but that’s not guaranteed,” says Lewis, who adds that the fireflies begin to appear around April 15. “They can get killed off by certain rain events, a severe thunderstorm in the afternoon or the evening.”

Lewis’ process as a potter is well known, but over the past two decades the blue ghost firefly has come to define his life just as much. He’s created a website (www.doiop.com/doiopfirefly) to document what he sees, and each spring he sends alerts to friends and interested observers so they can witness the phenomenon.

Despite their uniqueness, the fireflies haven’t been subjects of much scientific study. “What’s on my website is what I’ve been able to deduce about them over the years,” says Lewis.

Jennifer Frick-Ruppert, an associate professor of ecology and environmental studies at Brevard College in North Carolina, recently co-authored only the third scientific paper on Phausis reticulata. “I enjoy talking to Don because he is such an enthusiast,” she says. “He makes some good observations.”

Two springs ago, Pam Burgess Shucker ’69, Lewis’ longtime friend, made the trek to Cleveland to see the fireflies. The show started promptly at dusk.

She wrote of her experience, “The eerie, hauntingly beautiful blue lights began to flicker one at a time. I attempted to follow each pale blue flash through dark so complete I often bumped into the person beside me. At the end of an hour, thousands of ghostly blue sparks lit the black woods as if haunted matches danced. . . . The event proved a spectacular experience and memory for me.”

“My wife, the author, a 1993 graduate, is a freelance writer in Hendersonville, N.C. A former Furman baseball player, he was the right fielder for the Asheville (N.C.) Diamonds baseball club that won its second straight Men’s Senior Baseball League Fall Classic championship in Jupiter, Fla. The D’backs captured the 2010 35-over American Division title with a 7-2 record after earning the 35-over Central Division title in 2009.
Designating gifts allows donors to support specific areas of interest.

**MAKING THE DECISION**

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- Performing and fine arts
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- Specific academic department
- Furman United, a special two-year effort to raise $120,000 to provide support to students who are facing increased financial challenges due to the current economic conditions.

Examples of how designated gifts have worked in recent years:

- Donors interested in supporting specific areas of student life/organizations have been instrumental in establishing various means of support, one of them being the Paladin Club.

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**WHILE MAJORING IN ASIAN STUDIES**

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His role with the fraternity opened doors for him to attend several of the national organization’s leadership programs — and ultimately resulted in a position with the national staff as a leadership consultant. Based out of Oxford, Ohio, he works with fraternity chapters and university officials in such areas as scholarship, recruitment, risk management and alumni relations.

McPhee says that traveling the country and visiting college campuses has helped deepen his appreciation for Furman. “Other than my formal education, Furman taught me how to live in community and what it is like to really be a participant in our communities,” he says. “Having been actively involved at Furman, I am acutely aware that those opportunities are possible only through various means of support, one of them being alumni giving.”

McPhee says the combination of his college and work experiences has helped motivate him to establish an early pattern of giving to Furman. “Frequently people say that when they become more financially stable they will gladly give back to their alma mater, their church, the United Way, or other causes,” he says. “But I think we always have the means to give back. While the amount may vary at times, the impact does not.

Choosing to give to Furman makes a much bigger statement than my $25 monthly 401(k) account that I hold. McPhee writes, “I’ve been mindful of needing to make commitments to those organizations and institutions which have meant and continue to mean a great deal to me. As such, I have named Furman as a co-beneficiary of a 401(k) account that I hold.

“The only way I can think of is to channel that money to those organizations that I care about. And I care about Furman.”

**Corporate executive seizes opportunity to ‘Step Up’**

As President of the Broshe Group, an international company that provides advice, coaching and mentoring to help businesses boost productivity and performance, Melissa Evans ’94 has established a thriving career as a consultant, speaker and author.

Evans, who majored in health and history at Furman, holds a master’s degree in healthcare policy and administration from Mercer University’s Stetson School of Business and has experience in a host of areas, from healthcare to banking, manufacturing and non-profits. In addition to her business success, she has written two books: Full Circle, for entrepreneurs looking to improve their management style, and It’s Not Your Daddy’s Store, designed to help small businesses learn to stand out and move up in their companies.

Evans, who lives in Detroit, has also established a way to remain connected to the university — and has become part of the “Step Up” program, through which alumni make a commitment to double their pledge to the university over a three-year period. Funds committed through “Step Up” go toward scholarships.

Of her days at Furman, Evans says, “I did not have many means, but I had a good mind, and Furman gave me the opportunity to learn how to think and be a great problem solver. Now, in times like these, I want other students to have the same opportunities that were afforded me.”

Because of Furman’s contribution to her career success, Evans says she understands the value of giving back. She hopes her gifts will provide financial security for a worthy student who will realize that, by maximizing their opportunities, “They will be in a great position to make a huge difference in the world.”

Visit www.broshegroup.com for more on Evans’ work. To learn about the “Step Up” program, contact john.kemp@furman.edu.

Peter J. Kemp, Furman’s director of estate and gift planning, recently joined Furman’s Young Benefactors — alumni who graduated in the last 20 years and contribute $1,000 or more annually to the university — and has become part of the “Step Up” program, through which alumni make a commitment to double their pledge to the university over a three-year period. Funds committed through “Step Up” go toward scholarships.

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**SOMETHING FURMAN ORGANIZATION TO ‘Step Up’**

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**FURMAN UNIVERSITY**

THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY’S COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN

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- Service learning
- Specific academic department
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Examples of how designated gifts have worked in recent years:

Dennis interested in supporting student service projects made it possible for Furman’s chapter of Habitat for Humanity to help build ecologically friendly homes. And a gift designated for undergraduate research provided funding for three students to spend three weeks in Bermuda, where they conducted marine research at the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences.

By designating a gift for a specific area, you become more involved in Furman’s work — and ensure the best use of your donation.

Contact john.kemp@furman.edu to learn more about gift options.

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“Choosing to give to Furman makes a much bigger statement than my $25 monthly contribution. It says I believe in what the institution is doing and want to support what it is trying to do. Furman constantly challenges you not only to think critically, but to act. Giving now and in the future is one way I can do that.”

Young alum recognizes importance of planned giving

SOME FOLKS THINK that the subject of wills and estate planning is solely for the “retirement crowd” or those “special organizations and institutions which have meant and continue to mean a great deal to me.” As such, I have named Furman as a co-beneficiary of a 401(k) account that I hold.

“Being all of 28, it is very likely that this provision will change over the course of what I hope will be a very long life, but I wanted to make you aware of this designation and tell you that as my estate plans evolve I always expect to have Furman included in some way in those plans.

‘As a new planned giving officer,’ McMichen writes, ‘I’ve been mindful of needing to make commitments to those organizations and institutions which have meant and continue to mean a great deal to me. As such, I have named Furman as a co-beneficiary of a 401(k) account that I hold.

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Visit www.broshegroup.com for more on Evans’ work. To learn about the “Step Up” program, contact steve.perry@furman.edu.

“Should my estate provision for Furman change, I will be sure to keep you informed. I very much appreciate the work that you and the rest of the planned giving and ward development and alumni staff perform on behalf of our alma mater. As I work to help Walker continue to grow and thrive, it is comforting to know that Furman’s future is in good and capable hands.”

Contact nancy.perry@furman.edu to learn more about planned giving opportunities.

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Because Furman Matters.

THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY’S COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN
Teaching award latest feather in Turgeon’s cap

Furman

At Wake, though, she was fortunate to have Walter Bo as a mentor. This was the career for her, and she let her advisor know of her interest in her wonder at discovering that her professors seemed to have the ideal life: work, which focuses on spinal cord injuries and neurodegenerative diseases. They can relate to the research, and they become invested in the projects. Turgeon’s abilities in the classroom carry over to the research lab. She professor I have ever had. She provides a serious, challenging learning environment that is also fun, personable, even humorous.”

Southern College in Memphis, Tenn., says that what sets Turgeon apart as a teacher and mentor is her ability to mix classroom rigor with classroom and the department as a whole feel to answer any questions. Her 50-minute cellular biology teaching the event with students. “Hearing a professor laugh at a joke or funny story that they may not have known even existed.”

At Furman, Turgeon is known for allowing introductory students’ concerns about their ability to handle college science courses. Caroline Wallace ‘11 adds that biology majors consider Turgeon an excellent teacher “because she goes over all aspects of a topic clearly, taking the time to make sure that no one is lost. And she is frequently available in her office to answer any questions. Her 50-minute cellular biology lectures seemed to fly by. We covered a lot of material, and she always kept it fascinating.”

Michael Bingham says her sense of humor often helps break the ice with students. “Having a professor laugh at a joke or funny story can make the relationship much less intimidating,” he says. “The academic demands in her class are very stringent — tests are very thorough, and there is no slack cut on graded assignments — but you are allowed to enjoy the class and laugh along the way.”

In Bo, Turgeon found someone who said, “I don’t expect you to be me.” He gave her opportunities to develop her classroom and laboratory skills, going so far as to hand her responsibility for developing 130 medical students.

While teaching, teaching medical students helped Turgeon realize that she preferred working with undergraduates. “Medical students have a very specific purpose,” she says. “It’s more fun to work with undergraduates. You can show them what’s out there, point out things that they may not have known even existed.”

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— JIM STEWART

Students benefit from DeLancey’s experience, knowledge

WHEN CHARLES DELANCEY was 13 — "back on the farm in Indiana," he says — his mother decided to sign him up for a public speaking contest. This wasn’t a particularly unusual thing for to do. "My big sisters gave speeches, too," he says, "and I just loved giving speeches."

And they gave him well. Young Charles won that first contest, and during high school he continued to compete in 4-H oral competitive events and on the debate team. He was talented enough to win the state 4-H public speaking championship and earn a scholarship, which he applied toward study at Butler University, a liberal arts institution in his home state. There he studied speech and rhetoric under professor Nicholas Cripe. But as he approached graduation, DeLancey was uncertain about what career path to follow. He was considering such options as politics and ministry, but Cripe suggested that, to help him clarify his interests, he should pursue a master’s degree. So DeLancey headed to the University of Georgia, and in a year he had earned his master’s in speech communication. Then fate stepped in when the head of the speech department at Clemson University called Georgia to ask, “Might you have anyone who might fill a position?”

DeLancey got the recommendation, which he attributes in part to good fortune: “Students know that he cares about them and that he takes their curricular and extracurricular activities seriously,” says O’Rourke. “He can often be found at his adviser’s musical performances, cross country meets, tennis matches and internship sites. He is involved and, being so, encourages them to be involved. In short, he tells them that they matter and that their educational decisions matter, too.”

Kristen Fischler Anthony ’05, a DeLancey’s adviser as a student and now a member of Furman’s administration department, echoed O’Rourke’s comments in her nominating letter. She wrote, “Dr. DeLancey is not only concerned with your performance in his classes and other, but in life in general. He strives to make the classroom and the department a whole feel like a community, creating a team environment based on mutual respect and encouragement. In advising, he does not simply give black-and-white instructions, but rather provided me help me along in self-discovery.”

DeLancey believes that getting to know his students and understanding their needs and expectations are vital to his advisory efforts. Besides, he says, “They’re such good kids.”

Once he’s established a relationship with the students, he says, “We talk through the courses and what their career interests might be, and we work to order their course selections so that they don’t have to pick up any classes. I take pride in helping my advisees get all four classes they want each semester.”

As the senior member of the department, he is also the go-to person when colleagues have a question or concern. “He taught all of us how to advise,” says O’Rourke.

DeLancey acknowledges his status, but in a characteristically self-effacing way: “Since I’ve been here so long, I’ve seen the system evolve. I understand the process, and I’m able to share what I know with others.”

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Furman Reports 27
Teaching award latest feather in Turgeon’s cap

GIVEN THE EVENTS

or is suffering from multiple sclerosis or ALS [amyotrophic lateral sclerosis]. She says, “Most students know or know of someone who has a spinal defect, work, which focuses on spinal cord injuries and neurodegenerative diseases. Furman consistently has a large number of students wanting to contribute to her environment that is also fun, personable, even humorous.”

While rewarding, teaching medical students helped Turgeon realize that she preferred working with undergraduates. “Medical students have a very specific purpose,” she says. “It’s more fun to work with laboratory students. You can show them what’s out there, point out things that they may not have known even existed.”

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In BC, Turgeon found someone who said, “I don’t expect you to be me.” He gave her opportunities to develop her classroom and laboratory skills, going so far as to hand her responsibility for developing six weeks worth of lectures and labs for a gross anatomy class with 110 medical students.

She also points out that at many graduate schools, supervisors expect you are allowed to enjoy the class and laugh along the way. “They taught subjects they loved, they did research in the summer, and they had more free time to make sure that no one is lost. And she is frequently available with students. “Hearing a professor laugh at a joke or funny story can make the relationship much less intimidating,” he says. “The more personable, even humorous.”

Turgeon’s abilities in the classroom carry over to the research lab. She manages her time to make sure students are engaged. “Some students need to be coaxed a little bit,” she says. “I take pride in helping my advisees get all four assignments delivered on time, so that they don’t have to pick up any classes. DeLancey acknowledges his status, but in characteristically self-effacing way: “Since I’ve been here so long, I’ve seen the system evolve. I understand the process, and I’m able to share what I know with others.”

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JEREMY LEMING

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Furman

Brewer’s guidance continues to shape students’ choices

CHARLES BREWER has collected a series of awards and achieved widespread recognition during more than 40 years of teaching psychology at Furman. As the senior member of the faculty, he has carried the mace at major university ceremonies for a number of years, most recently at the October inauguration of President Rodney Smull.

Brewer recently marked his 55th year as a college professor (he’s been at Furman since 1967). And at last May’s Commencement he received the Alistor G. Furman, Jr., and Janie Eede Furman Award for Meritorious Achievement, becoming just the second professor to receive both the meritorious teaching and awards. Tom Cloer, professor emeritus of history, was the first.

Most everyone who has graduated from a college or university has had a “Charles Brewer” in their life. He’s the professor who challenged and prodded and worked you harder than anyone else. As a student, you probably felt his demands were unreasonable and his tests were unfair. Looking back, you hope your children are fortunate to have a teacher like Brewer.

“When the students are wise they say I was not so demanding, but when they love they appreciate it more,” Brewer said. “I remember when I taught an introductory course in theology. I’m not sure if the students in that class appreciated the challenge.”

A native of Arkansas, Brewer received his undergraduate degree from Hendrix College and his master’s and Ph.D. in experimental psychology from the University of Arkansas.

When Gordon Blackwell took over as president of Furman in 1986, Brewer was not really a department. It had two people. Brewer had 12.

Brewer has been the author’s professor in psychology at Harvard, was nominated for the APA Distinguished Teaching Award in Psychology, and he is a recipient of the American Psychological Association’s Distinguished Career Contributions to Education Award. The APA also named him the Distinguished Teaching Award in his honor. He serves as the APA delegate to the American Council of Learned Societies.

Brewer also served as president of the Southern Psychological Association and served on the faculty at the University of South Carolina.

Gray Fitzgerald ’86, the Bible College professor for whom the Brewer Center for the Study of Image of God Emerged (W&L City Press, 2010), said the author lives in Columbia, S.C., and has enjoyed an extensive career in lay ministry and social service work. He says his book “addresses the concern that on one hand, large parts of the Bible depict God as ordinating genocide, racism, ethnic cleansing and other forms of violence. God is also portrayed as punishing not only sinners but their descendants for many generations. On the other hand, the Bible is understood as the holy inspired word of God and the ultimate guide for our lives.”

“Despite these characterizations of God, it also includes descriptions that counter these images. "Out of this conflict of understanding, a wonderful image of God emerges. Visit http://bibleconfrontsthebible.com.”

Edward Hammett ’76, James B. Pardo, and John Pider, editors, With Calvin in the Chateau of Westminster: Great Men Making Shifts Without Making Afool. A Coach Approach to South African Leadership (Chalice Press, 2001). Aspired to the spiritual life of fast-paced lives, an unpredictable economy, population diversity, and church and denominational challenges, this book is designed to help churches and non-profits address change and transition with courage and hope. Leonard Saven of Drew University Theological School says: “This is an absorbing and accomplished look at a coach approach to south/southern living and leading - a skillful contribution to the coaching literature.” Hammett, who has written several books, is a longtime church leader and serves as church and clergy coach for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina. He is an expert in business development and organizational behavior, and Delveine Literary Agency represents him. Visit http://chalicepress.com.

Elinita Uyford Williams ’83, ‘81, First Lady, Now Adult. Voice of Truths, LLC. This book examines issues that pastors’ wives often encounter, particularly during their early years of marriage with a church, the author says. It is a resource filled with tips and stories of men and women. She says the book “is designed to help pastors’ wives often encounter, particularly during their early years of marriage, and an innovative reframing of a common pastor’s perspective.”

Paul Thomas, Challenging Givers: Comics and Graphic Novels (Sena Publishers, 2010). The Furman education professor published a book on teaching his students, parents and comic book readers a comprehensive exploration of comics and graphic novels as a challenging medium. The book is a primer for teaching comics and graphic novels in the classroom and for anyone serious about high quality texts. Thomas also presents comics and graphic novels within the growing understanding of multimodal and critical literacy.

PATRICIA GANN MHELYED 40, Debra Redline van Tuyll and Henry H. Schulte, Knights of the Quirk Conference: Comics and the American University (Furman University Press, 2010). The publisher describes the book: “When a unique assessment of war correspondence in Southern newspapers during the American Civil War was the门窗 -comers who covered the battles and political developments for Southern newspapers were doctors, lawyers, teachers, editors, and businessmen, nearly all of them with college and professional degrees. [and] they exhibited a dedication that laid the groundwork for news gathering in the twenty-first century.” With its emphasis on primary sources, the book offers an important and enduring historical perspective on the Civil War and also meets the highest standards of historical scholarship. "Knights of the Quirk" were journalists and professors at the College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of South Carolina. Van Tuyll is a professor at Augusta (Ga.) State University.

EDWARD HAMMETT ’76, James B. Pardo, and John Pider, editors, With Calvin in the Chateau of Westminster: Great Men Making Shifts Without Making Afool. A Coach Approach to South African Leadership (Chalice Press, 2001). Aspired to the spiritual life of fast-paced lives, an unpredictable economy, population diversity, and church and denominational challenges, this book is designed to help churches and non-profits address change and transition with courage and hope. Leonard Saven of Drew University Theological School says: “This is an absorbing and accomplished look at a coach approach to south/southern living and leading - a skillful contribution to the coaching literature.” Hammett, who has written several books, is a longtime church leader and serves as church and clergy coach for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina. He is an expert in business development and organizational behavior, and Delveine Literary Agency represents him. Visit http://chalicepress.com.

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BOOKMARKS

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Brewer's guidance continues to shape students' choices

CHARLES BREWER has collected a trove of memories and award speeches that he has written over the past 40 years to acknowledge the faculty members, administrators, and students who have had a “Charles Brewer” impact at Furman. “If you’ve been at Furman for any appreciable length of time, you’ve known somebody who he’s advised,” says Bonner. “If you’ve been at Furman for any appreciable length of time, you’ve known somebody who he’s advised.”

“One of them is Bridgette Martin Ward ’16, a faculty member at Stanford University. She recalls how Brewer pushed her as a student, using his influence to help her gain admission to top graduate schools, and counseled her through professional roadblocks.

“Brewer’s mentoring during and after they graduate. More than 200 of his aging students, and continuing to do so long after he’s left the campus, want to thank him for mentoring, counseling and encouraging them, no matter how he was received. They may not have known it at the time, but they were profoundly affected by his advice. His advice continues to shape my life and my choices.”

At the urging of his students, Brewer has been named the Furman University Professor in Psychology, and he is a recipient of the American Psychological Foundation presented him its Distinguished Teaching in Psychology Award. He also has garnered the American Psychological Association’s Distinguished Career Contributions to Education Award. The APA also named Brewer Distinguished Teaching Award honoree in his honor. He serves as the APA’s delegate to the American Council of Learned Societies. Now 79, Brewer rises at 5:30 each morning as he has for five decades, arrive at his office in John Hall at 6 a.m., and puts in a 12-hour work day. And he has no plans to slow down.

As he says, “I am not the retiring type. I worked during the administrations of Blackwell, Hallman, and Rhett. I’ve studied, led, and have worked as a coach. I plan to outlive the last one.”

— JOHN ROBERTS

The author is director of internal and external communications at Furman.

Bookmarks: Featuring summaries of recent publications by alumni and faculty

PATRICIA GANT MINEHEY ’40, Delia Redzik van Tulip and Henry H. Schulte,Kings of the Quirk Conference Conveners, andfurman (Furman University Press, 2010). The publication marks the book’s “unique assessment of war correspondence in Southern newspapers during the American Civil War. The men and women who covered the battles and political developments for Southern newspapers were doctors, lawyers, teachers, editors, and businessmen, nearly all of them with college and professional degrees and, as [they] exhibited a dedication that lifted the ground for news gathering in the twenty-first century.” In this emphasis on primary sources, the book offers an important and enduring historical perspective on the Civil War and also meets the highest standards of historical scholarship. “The book is a solid resource for anyone who were journalists and professors at the College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Southern California. Van Tulip is a professor at Augusta (Ga.) State University.

GRAY FITZGERALD ’16, The Bible Communicates: An Introduction to the Study of Image of Image of God Emergence (McGill-Queen’s Press, 2010). The author lives in Oxford, N.C., and has enjoyed an extensive career in lay ministry and social service work. He says his book “addresses the concern that on one hand, large parts of the Bible depict God as ordering genocide, racism, ethnic cleansing and other forms of oppression. God is also portrayed as punishing not only sins but their descendants for many generations. On the other hand, the Bible is understood as the holy inspired word of God and the ultimate guide for our lives.” He says, “the Bible contains these disturbing characterizations” of God, it also includes descriptions that counter these images. “Out of this conflict of understanding, I have written this wonderful image of God emerges.” Visit http://biblecommunicates.com.

EDWARD HAMMETT ’78, James R. and Nancy A. Fetzer, Making Shifts Without Making Waves: A Coach Approach to South Carolina Leadership (Chapel Hill: 2009). Amid the upheaval created by fast-paced lives, an unpredictable economy, population diversity, and church and denominational changes, this book is designed to help churches and non-profits address change and transition with courage and hope. Leonard Severt of Drew University Theological School says, “It is an absorbing and accomplished look at a ‘coach approach’ to south Carolina leadership is a stellar contribution to the coaching literature.” Hammett, who has written several books, is a longtime church leader and serves as church and clergy coach for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina. Pace is an expert in business development and organizational behavior, and Deelinked leadership effectiveness. Visit http://biblecommunicates.com.


DAVID MATHIS ’03 and John Piper, editors, With Cain in the* of Great Journey and* of the *Made Bigger Books, 2010). John Calvin was a prominent 16th-century theologian and Protestant reformer. Of this collection of essays, Timothy of Sanford University, executive editor of Christianity Today, says, “From the recent flurry of studies on Calvin, it is evident that we can understand neither the 16th century nor our own times without reference to the reformer of Geneva.” The book reveals Calvin a God-satisfed theologian whose love for Jesus Christ and his church touches every one of human life. A peak of a book!” Piper is a pastor and author in Winnsboro, Minn., where Mathis works as a theological assistant.

FROM FACULTY

SHELBY MATTHEWS, Perfect Matt: The Story of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity (Oxford University Press, 2010). Matthews, the Dorothy and B.H. Peace, Jr., Associate Professor of Religion, has taught at Furman since 1998. Of her latest book, the publisher says, “Perfect Matt illuminates the Stephen story as never before, offering a deeply nuanced view of violence, solidarity, and early Christianity. In seeking to understand the early development of a non-Jewish Christian identity, and an innovative reframing of the key texts of...” Visit http://biblecommunicates.com.

PAUL THOMAS, Challenging Gnosis: Comics and Graphic Novels (Oxford University Press, 2010). The Furman education professor explores the latest offshoot trend in comics and graphic novels, and includes several chapters devoted to examining various subgenres. Readers will discover key comics, graphic novels and film adaptations suitable for the classroom — and for anyone serious about high-quality texts. Thomas also presents comics and graphic novels within the growing understanding of multiliteracies and critical literary.

I was reading this book during the administrations of Blackwell, Hallman, and Rhett. I’ve studied, led, and have worked as a coach. I plan to outlive the last one.”
Smith leaves enduring legacy of wisdom, optimism

GARMON BROOKS SMITH was a man who lived his profession.

He was a role model for the students he taught and a legend even to those he did not teach. He was ever optimistic and would greet everyone with a “Good morning” no matter the time of day or night. He embraced every hour as an opportunity to be awakened to new experiences and insights, and he opened the world of education to his students by asking them, “What’s new in education today?” — and then telling them.

He was a man for whom the adage “What you see is what you get” was most apropos. He was straightforward, even blunt at times, and opinionated. He was wise and caring in his relationships with students and colleagues, but he never hesitated to tell someone what he thought they were doing wrong.

A person of routine, Garmon arrived at his office in Furman Hall each day at 8 a.m., went for lunch to eat and take a nap, then returned until 5 p.m. — unless he was teaching a night graduate class (which was every fall and spring term). He believed in wearing a tie and jacket as an example to aspiring and experienced teachers that professionalism begins with one’s attire.

Garmon has been described as a role model and as an inspiring teacher. He was ever optimistic and maintained the high esteem with which he was held by his colleagues and former students.

Crapps was highly respected scholar, teacher, faculty leader

AT THE FUNERAL OF ROBERT W. CRAPPS, Robert Crapps Professor of Religion, who died December 30, Jim Pitts, a longtime colleague and friend, shared an assortment of tributes from Crapps’ Furman friends and colleagues.

The stories revealed much about Crapps’ 30-year tenure as a teacher, scholar and faculty leader at Furman, from which he retired in 1987. They painted a portrait of a man known for his rigorous classroom standards, dry wit, firmness, and exceptional ability to understand and negotiate the maze-like morass of university politics. Collectively they illuminated the high esteem in which he was held by his closest associates.

A.V. Huff, former academic dean and historian professor, recalled visiting Crapps as a prospective faculty member in December of 1962. Dean Frank Bonner took Huff to a meeting of the faculty “Privy Council” and told him, “Here you’ll find out what Furman is really like.” Huff said, “Clearly, Bob was one of the leaders, and when I returned in September, I found Bob to be friendly, engaging, and a strong advocate of liberal education.”

“Before many weeks were out, I discovered that Bob had trouble with at least one of Paul’s admonitions in 2 Corinthians. Bob found it extremely difficult to ‘suffer fools gladly’ — whether among his faculty colleagues, in the administration, or in the classroom.

“In those years,” Huff added, “Bob was hard at work, on making the faculty handbook a comprehensive statement of faculty-administration responsibilities. A planning task in an institution that had little history of joint faculty-administration responsibilities. Only a person of Bob’s strength and mettle could have changed the course of university governance.

“He often commented that his faculty colleagues were only too happy to have someone crawl out on a limb and hand him the saw to cut down. But there were immediate benefits to his work, and I only understood years later from the perspective of the dean’s office what great work he had accomplished.

Another common theme was Crapps’ commitment to students and to the welfare and direction of the university. Religion professor Helen Liu has said, “In his mind the world of faith and the world of scholarship might struggle with one another, but they were not incompatible of collaboration. And the relationship was not just one way. The academy could learn from the person of faith, while requiring it to students to engage the larger world.”

William Bellinger ’72, W. Marshall and Lula Craig Professor and chair of the religion department at Baylor University, and Bill would remember Crapps’ “passionate instance that students take an honor and serious look at the evidence when thinking about biblical and theological questions. His contributions to introductory textbook and college textbooks in the Old Testament and New Testament have influenced many students at a variety of universities throughout the country, and so extended his ministry of teaching.”

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Wake Forest University, Crapps earned his graduate degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Before joining the Furman faculty, he was pastor of Baptist churches in Indiana and North Carolina, and a hospital chaplain and consultant in Kentucky.


Crapps and his wife, Dovie, who survives him, had three sons, all of whom graduated from Furman: Stephen ’72, John ’74 and Philip ’81. Bob and Dovie were well known for their congeniality and hospitality toward colleagues and students alike.

A picture in the Furman archives illustrates this point. It shows a young, smiling Dr. Crapps, casually dressed and wearing a golf hat, enjoying an outdoor campus event. Around his neck he wears a hand-written sign, evidently presented by students, bearing the title “Friendliest” actually, “Frien-Doe”.

Despite the spelling, the meaning is clear. As Bill Bellinger said, “Bob Crapps operated from the sweetest spirit on campus’ tradition.’ In addition to his wife and sons, Crapps is survived by three grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and a sister. Memorials: Department of Religion at Furman, or First Baptist Church of Simpsonville.
Furman REPORTS

Smith leaves enduring legacy of wisdom, optimism

GARMON BROOKS SMITH was a man who lived his profession — education. He was a role model for the students he taught and a legend even to those he did not teach. He was ever optimistic and would greet everyone with a “Good morri—” no matter the time of day or night. He embraced every hour as an opportunity to be strengthened by new experiences and insights, and he opened the world of education to his students by asking them, “What’s new in education today?” — and then telling them.

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A person of routine, Garmon arrived at his office in Furman Hall each day at 8 a.m., went home for lunch to eat and take a nap, then returned until 5 p.m. — unless he was teaching a night graduate course. He taught us, but more importantly I value the life he modeled for us. He embraced every hour as an opportunity to be prepared to improve income taxes — thus putting his “spare” time to work for the betterment of others. His involvements were gardening and fixing anything in or around his house, or those of others. His vegetables were always the most delicious and his roses the most regal one could find locally.

His death on December 12 elicited many memories and accolades from former students. One said, “I had the honor of Dr. Smith’s tutelage in his educational statistics course in the late 1970s, and now have the honor of teaching that course myself. I refer to Dr. Smith often in my own teaching. His positive influence has impacted, and will continue in legacy, to thousands of students.”

Another former student stated, “He had a keen eye for character and for those in his class who were characters. I value the lessons that he taught us, but more importantly I value the life he modeled for us. He is one of the reasons that I still enjoy going to work each day — being my 56th year working in public education in South Carolina.”

And from another student: “The advice he shared with his students was some of the most valued and useful words of wisdom I ever received. Often while teaching I would hear Dr. Smith’s voice in my head. He was an asset to Furman, not in kind and caring professor to all of his students. He will be missed.”

Garmon Smith is survived by three sons, four grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and a sister. Memorials: Open Arms Hospice, 1856 W. Georgia Road, Simpsonville, S.C. 29681.

— LESLEY QUAST

The author is assistant academic dean and professor of education at Furman.

Crapps was highly respected scholar, teacher, faculty leader

AT THE FUNERAL OF ROBERT W. CRAPPS, Rector of St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, Columbia, the senior class of Furman University’s School of Business on December 30, Jim Pitto, a longtime colleague and retired chaplain, shared an assortment of tidbits from Crapps’ Furman friends and colleagues.

The stories revealed much about Crapps’ 30-year tenure as a teacher, scholar, and faculty leader at Furman, from which he retired in 1987. They painted a portrait of a man known for his rigorous classroom standards, direct nature, biting wit, and exceptional ability to understand and negotiate the maze-like morass of university politics. Collectively they illuminated the high esteem in which he was held by his closest associates.

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With Fowler's appointment, football follows the family tradition

BRUCE FOWLER had just been introduced as Furman’s new head football coach, and he was looking out over the standing-room-only crowd in Yoos Conference Center. He had been away from Furman for nine years while serving as defensive coordinator and assistant head coach at Vanderbilt University, but it was apparent that his time on campus was greater than his time away. He saw familiar faces everywhere, people he had known since he arrived at Furman as a freshman in 1977, and he gave shout-outs to everyone from former First Lady Martha Johns to old acquaintances in Facilities Services.

He was so struck by the moment, in fact, that he abandoned his prepared notes and began his remarks by ruminating on his Furman experiences—walking on to the football team, Linly, and learning the coaching trade under such mentors as Art Baker, Dick Sheridan, Jimmy Satterfield and Bobby Johnson. He was glad to be back, he said, and it was a humbling experience to be handed the reins of the Furman football program.

Fowler didn’t have to say it on that cold December day, but it was clear he was doing more than returning home to become a head coach for the first time. In replacing Bobby Lamb, who resigned at the close of the 2010 season after compiling a 67-46 record over nine years, Fowler guaranteed that a unique and highly successful coaching legacy that began with Baker in 1973 and continued through the next four decades would not end.

“When we began our search, we didn’t limit ourselves to the Southeast or to looking at Furman folks,” said director of athletics Gary Clark. “We thought it was appropriate to look nationally for the best coach. But what we learned in taking that approach was just how good the Furman coaching lineage is, and Bruce stood out as the best person for the job.”

There is no questioning Fowler’s pedigree. He was a defensive back for the Paladins from 1977 through 1980, starting his final two seasons and playing on two Southern Conference championship teams. After graduating in 1981 and spending three years as an assistant at Win High School in Greenville County, he joined the Paladins coaching staff in 1984. During his 15 seasons at Furman, the Paladins went 146-70-3, won eight league titles, finished among the top three teams in the national championship game five times and played in the national championship game in 1985, 1989 and 2001, winning the title in 1989.

When all was said and done, who could blame Furman for keeping the head coaching position in the family? While the football program has experienced a few hiccups over the past four decades, it has hummed along at a remarkably steady pace, winning games, championships and the respect of those who can’t help but marvel at how small, private school with high academic standards can excel at the one sport in which it most likely shouldn’t.

“Since 1973, Furman football has produced a record of 289-152-9, with 12 conference championships and a national title. These have been only six losing seasons, and the Paladins have finished among the top three teams in the league standings 25 times,” Fowler said.


“It’s no secret that Furman’s coaching system has worked elsewhere, too. Both Sheridan and Johnson took most of their Furman assistants with them when they went to N.C. State and Vanderbilt, respectively. Sheridan’s Wolfpack teams challenged for Atlantic Coast Conference titles, and Johnson’s Commodores managed victories over Southeastern Conference foes South Carolina, Auburn, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Georgia, while winning their first bowl game since 1983 (against Boston College).

What’s the thread of success that runs from Baker through Lamb and now Fowler? All five coaches had their own styles, and each did things a little differently, but an unwavering commitment to excellence and a disciplined approach to the game have been the foundations of the program.

Ken Pettus, director of athletics development at Furman, served as linebackers coach under Sheridan at both Furman and N.C. State. No Furman coach has enjoyed a better winning percentage than Sheridan, and Pettus has no doubt about what made Sheridan’s teams successful.

“Dick’s teams were always so disciplined,” Pettus says. “They always led the league in fewest penalties, and there were very few blown assignments during a game. That discipline started with the head coach, then filtered down to the assistants and, finally, to the players.”

Fowler may have the best vantage point of all to comment on the positive attributes of the Furman coaching tree. Having played for Baker and Sheridan, he coached under Sheridan, Satterfield and Johnson, and alongside Lamb.

“Each coach had his own approach to the job, but there is one thing that has been constant,” Fowler said. “The football program has established a competitive standard of excellence, both on and off the field, that demands everybody’s best effort. It’s never been about being .500 and winning a few more games than you lose, but about winning championships and excelling at the highest level.”

Fowler, too, will prove to have his own style and approach. He says that while he isn’t exactly like any of his predecessors, he learned something from all of them.

“I believe that winning comes from doing the everyday, common, ordinary stuff extra-ordinarily well,” he said. “I believe in repetition, doing the same things over and over, and doing them well. There is a great tradition to build on and to continue here, and that will be our intent from day one.”

— VINCE MOORE

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

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There is no questioning Fowler’s pedigree. He was a defensive back for the Paladins from 1977 through 1980, starting his final two seasons and playing on two Southern Conference championship teams. After graduating in 1981 and spending three years as an assistant at Wren High School in Greenville County, he joined the Paladins coaching staff in 1984.

During his 28 seasons at Furman, the Paladins were 146-70-3, went eight league titles, made nine I-AA (now FCS) playoff appearances, and played in the national championship game in 1985, 1988 and 2001, winning the title in 1988. When Johnson was named head coach at Vanderbilt after the 2001 season, Fowler went with him as defensive coordinator.

Fowler didn’t have to say it on that cold December day, but it was clear he was doing more than returning home to become a head coach for the first time. In replacing Bobby Lamb, who resigned at the close of the 2010 season after compiling a 67-46 record over nine years, Fowler guaranteed that a unique and highly successful coaching legacy that began with Baker in 1973 and continued through the next four decades would not end.

“When we began our search, we didn’t limit ourselves to the Southeast or to looking at Furman folks,” said director of athletics Gary Clark. “We thought it was appropriate to look nationally for the best coach. But what we learned in taking that approach was just how good the Furman coaching lineage is, and Bruce stood out as the best person for the job.”

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Since 1973, Furman football has produced a record of 289-152-9, with 12 conference championships and a national title. There have been only six losing seasons, and the Paladins have finished among the top three teams in the league standings 25 times.

It began in 1973 when Art Baker was hired as head coach. When Baker (1973–77) left to coach The Citadel, one of his assistants, Dick Sheridan, took over. And when Sheridan left for North Carolina after the 2001 season, Fowler became the head coach of the team he had led as a player.


It’s no secret that Furman’s coaching system has worked elsewhere, too. Both Sheridan and Johnson took most of their Furman assistants with them when they went to N.C. State and Vanderbilt, respectively. Sheridan’s Wolfpack teams challenged for Atlantic Coast Conference titles, and Johnson’s Commodores managed victories over Southeastern Conference foes South Carolina, Auburn, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Georgia, while winning their first bowl game since 1985 against Boston College.

What’s the thread of success that runs from Baker through Lamb and now Fowler? All five coaches had their own styles, and each did things a little differently, but an unwavering commitment to excellence and a disciplined approach to the game have been the foundations of the program.

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Because the majority of this month’s readers are Furman alumni, most of us are on campus during
what were arguably the most formative years of our lives. We developed lifelong friends, and in times of need, the support of President Smolla’s genuine warmth and ability to connect with others is getting around, and is encouraging others to reconnect with Furman.

Many people have told me that President Smolla has been hosting home runs with his comments at these events, as he touches on such themes as crisis, outreach and a commitment to recruiting and developing strong, well-rounded students. His attitude and energy have also invigorated the environment on campus.

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IT’S ALL ABOUT MAKING AND MAINTAINING CONNECTIONS

The Alumni Office spent much of the fall hosting events all over the country to introduce President Rod Smolla to the Furman faithful. He has been most generous with his time and genuinely excited to have the opportunity to travel and meet alumni, parents and friends of the university. I have heard nothing but positive comments from the large crowds that have turned out to greet the new president.

And interestingly, I have seen new faces at these events. Part of the reason, I believe, is that word of President Smolla’s genuine warmth and ability to connect with others is getting around, and is encouraging folks to reconnect with Furman.

Many people have told me that President Smolla has been hosting home runs with his comments at these events, as he touches on such themes as civility, outreach and a commitment to recruiting and developing strong, well-rounded students. His attitude and energy have also rejuvenated the environment on campus.

Under his direction, Furman has launched a strategic planning process to involve alumni, parents and friends. I feel certain you will be excited and pleased about the results that will emerge from this effort. Watch for news about this in the coming months. You may be asked to help.

WANT TO ALMA MATER?

Everyone knows that the Alumni Office is all about keeping alumni connected to Furman. But let me talk about another way to remain connected — and to make a difference.

Because the majority of this magazine’s readers are Furman alumni, most of us are on campus during the week, and the majority of our students are young people. We lived our lives through a college experience that was arguably the most formative years of our lives. We developed lifelong friends, and as we all know, we tend to appreciate more and more the memories and experiences we created during our days at the Harvard of the South.

So how can we give back to an institution that did so much for us? One way is through making annual gifts to Furman. Annual gifts help bridge the gap between tuition and the actual cost to educate a student for a year. Currently, 1/3 of Furman’s tuition and fees of $38,000 (including room and board) cover only about 70 percent of the actual cost of a Furman education. For anyone who receives scholarship aid, the gap is considerably wider.

You can help make up the difference. Annual gifts go toward the operating needs of every department, program and activity at Furman. You may designate your gift in a number of ways: to honor a favorite faculty or staff member, support a specific academic or extracurricular program, fund internships, research projects or service learning efforts, or provide scholarship aid. A gift to the Furman United program, for example, offers assistance to students whose ability to continue their education has been adversely affected by the recent economic downturn.

With the value of a dollar being stretched more tightly than ever, it is becoming more difficult for some students to remain at Furman. This is where annual support really makes a difference. Today, thanks in large part to the generosity of annual donors, more than 70 percent of Furman students receive some sort of financial aid.

Gifts don’t have to be designated for specific projects, either. Unrestricted donations allow Furman to use the contributions in areas of most urgent need. Not that many years ago, Furman was recognized as a leader among liberal arts colleges in the percent of alumni who made annual gifts to alma mater. Those numbers have slipped slightly, and we would like to see the university move back among the national powerhouses.

By making your gift on-line, you can make the Furman donor badge. Use it to show your dedication to Furman by posting it on your Facebook or Twitter page. Doing so could help encourage others to follow your lead.


WEBSITE NOTES

We hope you visit the Alumni Association website (http://alumni.furman.edu) frequently, but in case you haven’t stopped by recently, we’ve added a few items to the page.

You can still submit class news, search for classmates and create an e-mail forwarding address. But you can also order a set of Furman pearls or a Furman cycling jersey. You can even download the Fight Song as your ring tone.

The sixth edition of Jerry Thomas’ textbook “Research Methods in Physical Activity,” published by Human Kinetics, has been released. It has been translated into seven languages and is said to be more than 70 percent of U.S. institutions, making it the most widely used book of kind of kinesiology and exercise science.

Jim is dean and professor in the College of Education at the University at North Texas in Denton.

2011 CLASS NOTES

This is your year to reconnect with Furman. But let me talk about the most special ways you can help Furman.

TOM TRIFITT

The author, a 1976 graduate, is director of the Alumni Association.

CLASSES 2011

63

Laurie Morris received the 2010 Maryland Psychological Association Award for outstanding contributions by an early career psychologist in service to the public. Earlier in the year she was recognized for 25 years of federal service with a Bronze Award for Excellence in Federal Career by the Federal Executive Board of Maryland. She earned her para-professional certificate in substance-related problems. She is also a staff psychologist in the Veterans Affairs Maryland Healthcare System, where she manages a resident unit for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and substance-related problems. She also coordinates the system’s psychology externship program, is a guest lecturer at the University of Maryland School of Nursing, and provides outpatient mental health services for veterans.

64

Kim McCahan Batson received her paralegal certificate from Meredith College in May 2010 and now works at Life Science Capital in Chapel Hill, N.C. Holder of an MBA degree, she previously worked in retail management and spent 10 years as a church secretary and administrator in Wilmington and Chapel Hill.

65

Tom Waters of Charleston, S.C., was the illustrator for two children’s books published in 2010. The Big Fat, a discovery by book Ann Love, executive director of the South Carolina Slapnut Bagatelle Run, and Sleep, Little Child, by musician and composer Mac Hofman. Sleep, Little Child is adapted from a lullaby written by musician and artist and Irmgard Hesseltine.

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Bill Shull, a retired regional editor for Better Homes & Gardens, a discovery by musician and artist Bill Shull. As a senior manager for prime contracts in South Carolina. He continues to work as an adjunct professor at Pfeiffer University and is a strategic consulting partner for the project’s psychology externship program, is a guest lecturer at the University of Maryland School of Nursing, and provides outpatient mental health services for veterans.

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69

Brian Hesseltine recently became general manager of High Cotton Restaurant in downtown Greenville. Linda Moehn Hunter Westphal of Charlotte, N.C., has been promoted to senior vice president at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, and has been with the bank for 18 years of service and is a senior charge consultant supporting the Global Banking and Markets Division.

70

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2010–11 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Clare Folio Morris ’83, president; I. Chris Brown ’83, president-elect; Harriet Arnold Williams ’74, past president; Rebecca Ann Armato ’83; Lynn Neely Barley ’78; N. Nolan Bittner, Jr. ’79; Frank W. Blackwood ’79; Sidney R. Blunt ’59; Mary Lou Walsh Caple ’89; Troia Morgan Cantwell ’97; Paul G. Godbold ’83; Michael L. Goylin ’81; Shannon Smory Henderson ’79; Lau Lille Hughes ’85; T. Yates Johnson, Jr. ’79; Dean Earle Knakewicz ’52; C. Todd Malo ’70; James J. Martin ’73; Herman A. Matheson, Jr. ’79; Andrew C. Medlin ’77; Matthew A. Miller ’99; Joseph C. Alston, Jr. ’79; William P. Morris, Jr. ’74; Emmett L. Patrick ’56; Scott W. Reader ’92; Gordon D. Sawyer ’53; Eileen L. J. Smith ’79; Cynthia Black Sparks ’89; Corrie Gamble Williams ’79.

Six-officers and other members: Rodney Smedal, president; Michael Gardell ’91, vice president for development; Tom Tipple ’76, director of Alumni Association; Tina Haynes Balles ’78, associate director of Alumni Association; Cal Hurst ’04, president, Young Alumni Council; Eric VanShure ’11, president, Student Alumni Council; Patrick Wallace ’11, president; Association of Furman Students; Shonaton Cantwell ’11, president, Senior Class.

David G. Guyton of Rock Hill, S.C., was sworn in as the new family Court Judge for the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit last April after being elected to the position by the South Carolina Legislature. He also serves as the Military judge for the S.C. National Guard. Chris Peabody joined Albert Tekson in February 2010 as chief operating officer. Albert is a homed building and Ipswich services firm in Washington, D.C.

84 Allen Barber has been appointed minister of music at Faith United Methodist Church in Spartanburg. He is also on the faculty of St. Martin’s Episcopal School in Atlanta as the instrumental music director.

85 The U.S. Agency for International Development has appointed Jim Barnhart mission director for Lebanon. He oversees USAID’s programs to help the Lebanese strengthen their democratic institutions, promote economic growth, improve education and health services, and support water and environment programs. Jim joined USAID in 2010.

87 BIRTH: Alvin E. Thomas and Allyn Hernandez, a daughter, Natalie Sofia, August 17. Allyn practiced pediatric and adolescent medicine at Summit Medical Group in Belkley Heights, N.J., and Al is a women’s basketball head coach at St. Bamian Medical System.

90 Richard Boggio has been named a director of the board of directors of the local Parish Medical Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Parish Medical Center in Tifton, Ga. The Foundation raises funds to support healthcare in North Boulevard County. Richard is a vice president of Boggio Gavan, a medical device company based in Philadelphia, Pa.

92 Lisa Stevens Gilford, an attorney with Aldon & Blod Dip Lip in Los Angeles, was included on the 2010 list of “Top Women Litigators” by Los Angeles and San Francisco Daily Journal. She serves as lead defense counsel for the Toyota Untertened Acceleration class action litigation and represents Toyota in more than 320 class actions pending throughout the United States.

93 Joanne Ellis Martin and her family have returned to Greenville after two years in France, where she worked as Michelin’s worldwide headquarters. She is now the financial director for Michelin Americas, Small Tires.

93 THIS YEAR IS REUNION!

James F. Downs of Charlotte recently rejoined the board of the North Carolina Blumental Performing Arts Center. He is also a member of the board of the Levine Museum of the New South.

94 Dr. Robert Eisen has been appointed chief executive of the Beige Group New York, as a managing director in charge of the firm’s merchant banking efforts in consumer and retail space.

96 Towne Vinyl of Greer, Ga., has opened Vinyl Works, a manufacturing and distribution team with St. Bamian Medical System.

96 BIRTH: Elaina S. Williams, February 8, 2011, daughter of John Richard Williams and Aisha S. Green, of Columbia, S.C.


2010 REALTOR OF THE YEAR REUNION!

Stacy Kopper, a physical education teacher at J.H. House Elementary School in Conoy, Ga., was one of three finalists for the 2010-11 Roddie County Public School Teachers of the Year Award. BIRTH: Michael and Kameron Crum Hoer, a daughter, Mya Jo, May 3. They live in Carmel, N.Y.

97 MARRIAGE: Allie Deckshon and John Wilson, May 29. They live in St. Louis, Mo., where Allie is a business professional counselor at Hope Counseling. BIRTH: Michael and Tanja Foster Wilson, a son, Micah-Conner, October 23, 2009. They live in Louisville, Ga.

98 Jeff Nolan has been named chief execu- tive officer of Crockett Hospital, an acute care facility in La Grange, Tenn. MARRIAGE: Carrie Ackerman and Jeffrey Nolan, November 13. They live in Mount Pleasant, S.C. Carrie is director of wellness product management for AIA Health, and Jeffrey is a sales consultant for Synthes Spine.

98 BIRTH: Dan and Heather Booth Howard, a daughter, Sydney Danielle, May 20. Dan is an engineer in the U.S. Marine Corps, stationed in Camp Lejeune, N.C.
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Mike Harley has joined Jen SHARE Technologies Inc. as vice president for corporate development and treasury. He serves as an officer of the company and as a member of its Leadership Council. Jen SHARE Technologies is a global resource and technology-based growth company that develops, produces and markets a broad range of specialty mineral, mineral-based and synthetic mineral products, and utilizes these materials and services. Mike previously worked with GrowthPhase, a consulting and interim management alliance firm that he founded. Paul Robertson has become a managing director with Jade Capital Partners, an investment management firm in Atlanta. Paul is a member of the Furman Board of Trustees and was most recently president and chief operating officer for Stakeholder Capital Management.

Skip Williams has been named executive director of product development for Arizona Pharmaceuticals, a biotech venture firm based in Washington, D.C. William was responsible for the company’s strategic and business development.

The South Carolina REALTOR® professional real estate association named David Burnett of Spartanburg its 2010 Realtor of the Year. The award is given to a member who works to advance the profession, embodies the spirit of high principles and fairness to the Code of Ethics, and practices good real estate principles. David has won several previous local and state CIR awards and currently serves as a National Association of REALTORS® director.

David G. Guyton of Rock Hill, S.C., was sworn in as the new family court judge for the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit last April after being elected to the position by the South Carolina Legislature. He also serves as the military judge for the S.C. National Guard. Chris Peabody joined Allied Telesis in February 2010 as chief operating officer. He joined Allied Telesis as vice president of Engineering and was named senior vice president of Engineering and OVP services firm in Washington, D.C.

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Allen Barney has been appointed minister of music at Faith United Methodist Church in Smyrna, Ga. He is also on the faculty of St. Martin’s Episcopal School in Atlanta as the instrumental music director.

The U.S. Agency for International Development has appointed Jim Barnhart mission director for Lebanon. He oversees USAID’s programs to help the Lebanese strengthen their democratic institutions, promote economic growth, improve education and health services, and support water and environment programs. Jim joined USAID in 2000.

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They live in Medña daughter, Lillian Paige, January 31, 2010. is an associate buyer for Ralphlauren.com.

16. They live in Franklin Square, N.Y. Linda

11. They live in Greer, S.C. Jason and

9. Matthew and

8. John and

7. Britten Williams

6. Janna Dyer

5. Miranda Sandoval

4. Amy Strickland

3. Jane Howell

2. Jeff Hayes

1. John and Katherine Fitch Pennygale

0. Ethan Fridley is director of the United Students Leasing Center’s General Education/Opus program in Greenville. He is currently studying for a master’s degree at Clemson University that will enable him to be a licensed professional counselor.

Matthew and Linda Murphy Kall, a daughter, Georgia Elizabeth, September 16. They live in Atlanta. is a son, Retrieved Stone, October 1. They live in Atlanta. is a senior investigator with the U.S. Army, and is the campaign director for United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta. is an associate director of athletics at Furman. is an adapted physical education teacher for the Lexington County School System and coach of field and golf. He recently completed his Ed.D. degree in educational administration through Georgia Southern University.

Furman ALUMNI NEWS

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39
BIRTHS: John and Katherine Fitch Pennyingleton, a son, Cole Alexander, October 16. They live in Greenville.

Jail T. Gaddeson ’04 and Stu Cohen, a daughter, Lila Katherine, August 9. Erica Williams was recently promoted to director of the United Way of Greater Ga. They live in Atlanta.

Jeffrey and Carla Larkin, a son, Owen Alexander, September 10. They live in Atlanta, Ga.


Brian and Sarah Aycock ’02, a daughter, Lillian Paige, January 31, 2010. They live in Florence, Tenn.


Clair Travis and Kenneth Sauer, September 25. They live in Chattanooga, Tenn., where they are United Methodist ministers.

BIRTHS: John ’04 and Elizabeth Coker Hamlet, a daughter, Anna Louise, October 28. They live near Greenville.

Alicia and drug lawyer, an attorney in Columbia, Ga., was elected to the State Senate in November. He represents District 13 and becomes the senator’s youngest member.

Rachel May Snell ’02 and Michael Cumbee Hipp, a son, Hiatt Stone, October 1. They live in Greenville.

Brian and Sadie Aycock ’02, a daughter, Kerrie Seltenheim Patten, February 13. They live in Charlotte, N.C.

Jason and Ruth Comer, a daughter, Lila Katherine, August 9. Erica Williams was recently promoted to director of the United Way of Greater Ga. They live in Atlanta.

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40 named director of public programming at Katie Norris Ross Alexander Mullinax T

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She is a human resources specialist at Fluor LLP, practicing in the areas of commercial litigation, bankruptcy and business, and corporate law.

MARRIAGES: Ryan Schmoecker Clark and Carly Louise Sobray ’07, April 10. She is a human resources specialist at Fluor Corporation, and he is a commercial real estate broker with the Furman Company in Greenville.

Darsey Culpepper and Brian Landon ’07. They live in Portland, Ore. She is a graphic designer, writer and photographer at Portland Rescue Mission, and he is an administrative assistant at InTown Presbyterian Church and is pursuing a master’s degree in public administration at Portland State University.

Katherine Keller Davis and John Campbell, August 14. Katherine is an attorney and recently had a clerkship with the Dorchester County (S.C.) Probate Court. John is a graduate of the College of Dental Medicine at the Medical University of South Carolina. They live in Greenville.

Kris Duvall and Liz Taylor. They both live in Columbia, S.C.

April 7. They live in Greenville. Sarah E. Martin is pursuing a master’s degree in social work performance at Indiana University in Bloomington. She received the Indiana University University Excellence Award, a fellowship that covers tuition and fees and provides a monthly stipend. She recently made her debut in a principal role in the university’s Opera Theatre in Tucson’s Juan-De-Arteaga. Visit her website, www.saranarratives.info.

Emmy Gaul. She is a graduate architect for Gensler, where George is an assistant solicitor for the 13th Judicial Circuit and Maripuin is a fur fashion designer and Melanie Jones and Jade Trimble, October 9. They live in Arlington, Va.

THIS YEAR IS REUNION! Rose Alexander Mullinax earned a medical degree from the University of South Alabama College of Medicine last May, graduating with honors as a member of Alpha Omega Alpha honor medical society. She took the Military oath of Office for Public Service and began a general surgery residency at the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, Calif. She was recently featured on the cover of News Journal in an article on military men in the military.

Katie Norris of Charleston, S.C., has been named associate professor of public programming at Middleton Place Foundation, which owns and operates Middleton Place, a national historic landmark.

Benjamin W. Wallace has joined the Macon, Ga., firm of Stone & Buster LLP, practicing in the areas of commercial litigation, bankruptcy and business, and corporate law.

MARRIAGES: Ryan Schmoecker Clark and Carly Louise Sobray ’07, April 10. She is a human resources specialist at Fluor Corporation, and he is a commercial real estate broker with the Furman Company in Greenville.

Ashley Elizabeth Eld and Robert Manning Christ. October 16. They live in Charlotte, S.C. She is scheduled to graduate from the Medical University of South Carolina School of Dental Medicine in May. He is a hospice nurse at Trident Regional Medical Center.


Jon Leathers and Shea Salinas were both selected by the Vancouver Whitecaps in the Major League Soccer expansion draft December 1. She was the Whitecaps’ fourth pick, played last season for the Philadelphia Union. Jon, the ninth pick, played for Sporting Kansas City (Missouri). Whitney Smith earned a doctor of physical therapy degree in December 2009 from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

MARRIAGES: Jonathan Borders and Amy Murdock, September 30. They live in Dallas, Texas, and work in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex.

Allison Leigh Buckner and David Wesley Parker, May 8. They live in Nashville, Tenn., where David works with Ernst and Young. LLC. Megan is completing her MBA in public health care and works with Nashville’s Baptist Hospital.

Brian Highsmith quizzed the a full-time art instructor at the National Art Council.

Bryant Long joined the program at Communications in Greenville as an intern.

Liz Liebrum is a junior account executive with the Hughes Agency, a marketing, advertising and public relations firm in Greenville.

MARRIAGES: Heather Hinson and Joshuaitol. They live in Paducah, S.C.

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PRESTIGIOUS EXHIBIT SPOTLIGHTS PRESSLEY’S WORK

WHEN NIKKI PRESSLEY (’04, B.A.) received word that her work would be included in the 2010 California Biennial — the Orange County Museum of Art’s signature program spotlighting young and emerging artists from across the Golden State — one of the first people she contacted was Terri Bright, professor and associate artist at Furman.

“Terri Bright had gotten to know many of the 45 artists chosen for the exhibition through her gallery representation — to which Pressley replies, ‘I don’t know why I’m here.’”

Pressley was among the last artists that curator Sarah Bancroft saw in putting together the California Biennial. “Nikki came recommended from a couple of different people — a curatorial colleague and an artist,” Bancroft says. After visiting Pressley’s Los Angeles studio, Bancroft was eager to introduce the Furman alumna’s work to a larger audience (more than 4,200 patrons in the first three weeks of the exhibit, which opened in October and runs through March 13).

“Nikki is fresh out of graduate school,” Bancroft says. “I don’t think she even realizes how strong her practice is.”

To be certain, contemporary art is a long way from biology, Pressley’s intended major when she enrolled at Furman. “I wanted to do orthopedic surgery, and that was mostly borne of the fact that I had torn my ACL twice,” says Pressley, a Greenville, S.C., native who sustained the injuries while playing basketball at Madison High School. “A lot of my friends would just come to the hospital with me, and I would hate that I was a hospital person.”

After graduating from Furman, Pressley moved to Chicago, where she spent eight months working for a non-profit organization, the American Friends Service Committee, on a travelling exhibition designed to educate college students about debt. While there, she also began studying Capoeira, a centuries-old, Brazilian-born mix of music, martial arts and dance. It informs her work to this day. Once she finished her work on the exhibit, she returned to Greenville and took a job with an advertising firm, all the while living at home, building her portfolio and saving for graduate school.

In the fall of 2006 Pressley enrolled at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, where she pursued a Master of Fine Arts degree in sculpture and installation. Visiting artist Ross Kenigsberg, a friend of Pressley’s, was instrumental in encouraging her to attend CalArts. “Ross is one of the most supportive people in the world,” says Pressley. “But it’s a really tough time to apply.”

“Since graduate school,” Bancroft adds, “Nikki’s process and her skill have been developed — I’d say her work — her focus — is a very personal exploration of what she is pursuing in contemporary art.”

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Sallie Max King Harbin '39, October 25, Greenville. She was associated with many civic organizations in their respective cities.

Owen Lee Koontz '17, McCormick, S.C. She was a teacher.

Roy Onias Barker '48, September 10, Greenville. She taught in the European Theater during World War II. Upon his return to Greenville he took over management of the family dairy farm. He went on to be selected South Carolina Dairyman of the Year and was appointed to the state Dairy Commission. He later became a property developer and served for 45 years in the South Carolina House of Representatives. He was appointed to the State Department of Social Services Board, whose members elected him to serve as chairman, and also was a flutist and a band instructor.

Jean Hendricks Farry '43, October 1, Daisy, S.C. She taught at Foilden High School, and after retiring she was active with the Furman Retired Teachers Association, the Round Table Group and the Cannon Memorial Hospital Volunteer.

Grace Barrett Gambrell '43, October 1, McCormick, S.C. She was a teacher.

Joyce Kittrell Cook '44, November 12, Greenville. She taught and served as a photo intelligence officer in the European Theater during World War II. Upon his return to Greenville he took over management of the family dairy farm. He went on to be selected South Carolina Dairyman of the Year and was appointed to the state Dairy Commission. He later became a property developer and served for 45 years in the South Carolina House of Representatives. He was appointed to the State Department of Social Services Board, whose members elected him to serve as chairman, and also was a flutist and a band instructor.

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THE LI FELLOWS PROGRAM is designed to develop young leaders for South Carolina. The program features a series of five-day seminars, held over two years, for 20 state residents ages 30 to 45. They are selected from a diverse pool of nominees and represent all professions, from business and government to education and non-profits. They also share a common goal — strengthening South Carolina.

Four Furman graduates are part of the newest class of Liberty Fellows, chosen from a nominating pool of 400. All are deeply involved in civic and community activity in their respective cities.

John Castile ’96 of Columbia is deputy executive director of New Hampshire Public Radio. He, too, is a DLI graduate. The program features a series of leadership and professional development seminars in South Carolina. He was a member of Daughters

Mary Smith Williams ’42, November 3, Greenville.
Jean Hendricks Farry ’43, October 1, Daley, S.C. She taught at Holmes High School, and after retiring she was active with the Retired Teachers Association, the Round Table Group and the Cannon Memorial Hospital Volunteer Corps.
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Owen Lee Koontz ‘43, May 20, Port Angeles, Wash. After leaving Furman to enter high school, he earned his wings and was commissioned to fly missions in North Africa during World War II. He was shot down three times and eventually spent four months in a POW camp in Germany. After the war, he went on to Communication Officer School and spent 45 years working for the Air Force, developing and installing navigational systems. In 1948, he worked with Harris from the Air Force Institute of Technology. He went on to earn a master’s degree in electrical engineering from Stanford University and to work in the aeronautical research lab at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. After 22 years in the Air Force, he retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel and moved to San Jose, Calif., where he worked on the Apollo space projects at NASA’s Ames Research Center until retiring in 1981.

Joyce Kellett Cook ’44, November 10, Greenville, S.C. She taught voice and served as church choir director for many years. She was a life member of the Furman Inn Music Club.

Luna Edwards Hilliard ’44, October 31, Greenville.

William Vernon Powers ’44, October 30, Hendersonville, N.C. He is a U.S. Army veteran of World War II, serving in Alaska and Okinawa. After the war he returned to Hendersonville and became chief of police in Henderson County, serving for 22 years. He was the first chief of police to be indicted in the North Carolina Law Enforcement Training Institute of Home “Chief,” as he was affectionately known, directed the first department in Western North Carolina to hire dogs to help solve crimes, and he was instrumental in training the North Carolina National Guard in riot control and crime-solving techniques. He was associated with many civic organizations and served as president of the North Carolina Apple Festival and grand marshal of the King Apple Parade. He was a founding member of the Hendersonville-County Rescue Squad and was included in the Hendersonville High School Hall of Fame. David Montgomery Jenness ’45, September 22, Greenville. He taught in Furman’s Department of Modern Languages and for 45 years was the accountant for Pepsi Hatton International. Catherine Fellows Macnamara ’46, September 25, Greenville. She was active in community service and in the American Diabetes Association and other charitable organizations. She worked at the South Carolina Apple Festival and for four years he became a chaplain in the Hendersonville High School Hall of Fame.

Douglas Allen Venters ’49, November 8, S.C. After serving in the Marines for four years he became a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force, from which he retired after holding chaplaincies at bases in Texas, Japan, South Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, South Carolina, Ohio, Germany

Roy Onias Barker ’49, September 10, Greenville. S.C. After service with the U.S. Navy during World War II he embarked on an engineering career, most of which was spent in Rochester, N.Y. He was retired from Eastman Kodak.

Wilda Adele Smith Lapingoli ’46, June 11, Atlanta.

Betty Rose Newton Summerrstoff ’48, August 28, Columbia. S.C. With her husband, Ben, she owned and operated Laurel Hill Inn and Rib Room. She also attended seminary at Duke University, where she also taught accounting and instrumental in developing the Department of Business Administration. In 1972 he returned to Greenville County and served as principal of two elementary schools. In retirement he taught in the country’s adult General Education Diploma program. He served as a president of the Piedmont Lions Club. L. Lawson Syrdy ’50, December 9, Glenside, Pa. He was retired in the Navy during World War II at the age of 15.

and served on several subcommittees. After his discharge he was a member of the Naval Reserve for 20 years, retiring as a Lieutenant. Upon completing Furman degrees he began a career in education as a junior high school science teacher in Greenville, earning a master’s degree from the University of South Carolina and a doctorate from Duke University. He served as principal of two elementary schools. In retirement he taught in the country’s adult General Education Diploma program. He served as a president of the Piedmont Lions Club. L. Lawson Syrdy ’50, December 9, Glenside, Pa. He was retired in the Navy during World War II at the age of 15.

James F. Herley ’59, June 24, Pabst, Colo. He was a retired colonel in the Air Force and was the founder of Pico Driving School.

Cannon Eugene Price, Jr., ’50, October 31, Anderson, S.C. A veteran of South Carolina and Virginia, and taught at Clemson University, North Georgia College & Community College. While in retirement he also attended seminary at Duke and was ordained a Methodist minister. He went on to serve on churches in Virginia for 16 years, retiring in 1988. He was a member of the Alabama State University Hall of Fame. After retiring he helped provide chaplain services to the Veterans of World War II and was national chaplain from 1997-2003. He is a life-long member of the National Education Association and of the Virginia PTA.

DEATHS

Sallie Mae King Garbin ’29, November 23, Columbia. She taught in several elementary schools during her 34-year career. She was a member of Daughters of the American Revolution and Colonial Dames XIX Century.

Dorothy DuFrene Grimble ’39, October 21, Greenville. She was an active volunteer in civic affairs and was a sustaining member of the Junior League.

Charles Dorsay Horton ’41, October 3, Statesboro, Ga. After working as a teacher and principal, he earned a doctoral degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and went on to serve as pastor of churches in Kentucky and Georgia. John Kam Earle ’42, December 9, Greenville. He worked briefly in Washington, D.C., for the U.S. Geological Survey before joining the Army Air Corps and serving in a photo intelligence officer in the European Theater during World War II. Upon his return to Greenville he took over management of the family dairy farm. He went on to select South Carolina Dairymen of the Year and was appointed to the state Dairy Commission. He later became a property developer and was involved in 45 years in the South Carolina House of Representatives. He was appointed to the State Department of Social Services Board, whose members elected him to serve as chaplain, and also was a flautist and a Bay Fiddlers Band.

Marian Smith Williams ’42, November 3, Greenville.

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ELECTION WRAPUP: WOODALL WINS CONGRESSIONAL SEAT

One of the new congressmen’s major issues is likely to be the “tax gap.” In recent years he worked with Linder and co-author Neal Boortz on two books promoting the issue, one of which was a New York Times best-seller. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution says that Linder credits Woodall with “helping improve and promote [his] plan to replace the federal income tax with a national sales tax.”

Woodall emerged from a field of eight candidates in the Republican primary last summer. He won a runoff for the nomination, then defeated Democrat Doug Heckman in the general election with 67 percent of the vote. According to Furman records, in November, Woodall was elected to succeed Linder, who retired, as the representative for the district, which consists of much of Gwinnett County and the eastern Atlanta suburbs.

Woodall, part of the Republican wave that swept into office, is a 1992 Furman graduate with a degree in political science. He holds a law degree from the University of Georgia. John Ryan of the Tea Party movement’s principles of limited government, strict constitutional...
Morale Marie Gardner Starrett ’54, November 7, Fairview Heights, Ill. Frances Bell Thesing ’54, October 14, Greenville. He worked as a real estate broker and investor in Hampton, Va., where he owned and operated Peninsula Homes, Inc. He served as chair of the Board of Low Income Housing and was active in the development of Great Oak Apartments for the Elderly in Newport News, Va. He also worked with the Assisted Housing Development and the Newport News Homeowners Association.

Johnney Murdock Ultraik ’13, November 21, Raleigh, N.C. A music teacher, she taught in schools in South Carolina, Florida and Maryland, and also gave private lessons. She was a member and director of the Anna Arduncan County Concert Association throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Sophie Fisher McKissick ’54, October 23, Greenville. As a teen singer, she was active in community affairs.

Malva Mousse Gardiner Starrett ’54, November 7, Fairview Heights, Ill. Frances Bell Thesing ’54, October 14, Greenville. He worked as a real estate broker and investor in Hampton, Va., where he owned and operated Peninsula Homes, Inc. He served as chair of the Board of Low Income Housing and was active in the development of Great Oak Apartments for the Elderly in Newport News, Va. He also worked with the Assisted Housing Development and the Newport News Homeowners Association.

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and the District of Columbia. He received numerous awards and medals, including Pennsylvania Wing, Bronze Star, Air Force Commendation Medal and 12 Ribbons with Two Oak Leaf Clusters. Major Battle Star. He served for a time as pastor of Richfield Baptist Church in North Carolina and was a member of the Retired Officers Association and Disabled American Veterans.

Marye Siddiq Perron ’51, September 14, Greenville. She taught at Augustine Catholic Elementary School.

Charles Lewis Pearson ’44, September 15, September 17, High Point, N.C. He was an elementary school teacher.

Harry Evert Tibbitt ’54, September 17, Birmingham, Ala. He served in the armed forces as chaplain’s assistant at Fort Chaffee, Ark., during which time he was also intern assistant at the National Cathedra of Washington, D.C. A graduate of the Eastern State School of Music and the University of Michigan, he was the first full-time African American noted of professional rank in the United States.

Malone Mossie Gardner Starrett ’54, November 5, Fairview Heights, Ill.

Francis Dell Thaxton ’54, September 17, High Point, N.C. She was an elementary school teacher.

Mollie和Gardner Starrett ’54, November 5, Fairview Heights, Ill. "There are so many opportunities open to the next generation of leadership, especially women," she said. "I encourage everyone to pursue their dreams and continue to make a difference in their communities.

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BUBBLEY HELP FOR LAKE RESTORATION

Anyone taking a leisurely stroll around the Furman lake in recent months has likely noticed a bubbly new water feature.

"It can be kind of a mess," said Nicole L. "But it's really nice to see the lake transitions back to its natural state."

A deep layer of the lake will take longer to heat in the warmer months, closing the built-up algae and bacteria. Rainwater management will help reduce the lake from siltation, returning it to normal."
Harriet Lee Gibson (11), November 1, Lancaster, S.C. After completing her certification as a registered nurse in 1946, she enlisted in the Army Nurse Corps. She served as a registered nurse for more than 20 years before returning to school to obtain her bachelor’s degree. Afterward she taught in Spartanburg District School for 25 years. She was a long-time volunteer for Mobile, founded, and played an instrumental role in establishing the Landrum Cemetery Perpetual Care Association. In 2004 she received the Landrum Chamber of Commerce’s Citizen of the Year Award.

Donald A. Prewette (11), October 26, Chester, S.C. After high school he entered the U.S. Naval School of Music in Washington, D.C. He went on to play in U.S. Navy bands for three years, has the honor of playing “Taps” numerous times at Arlington National Cemetery. He eventually became an ordained minister and was pastor of churches in South Carolina and Georgia for 23 years before retiring on a pension in 2004. Active with the Boy Scouts, he also sang with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus. He is the father of former (S.C.) Supreme Judge No. 2013. S.C. Mason, Valley of Atlanta Orient of Georgia, and Yorkrash of Shriners of Atlanta.

Frank Arthur Hooper (M. A.), (3), October 29, 1975, July 6, 1977, October 21, 2007, Hattiesburg, Miss. For military service with the U.S. Army, he was a pastor and missionary to Israel from 1958 to 1968. He was also active in church work and a drug abuse counselor.

Henry Ravenel “Pat” Nicholson (II), November 1, 1937, November 7, 2011, Greenville, S.C. He was an art teacher in several South Carolina cities.

Kathy Lee Shell (13), October 5, Tuscaloosa, Miss. She taught for many years at John Burrough Elementary School in Baltimore and held an Ed.D. degree in education from Johns Hopkins University.

Caron Gayle McDonald Archer (87), August 10, 1975, Lake City, S.C. She obtained her bachelor’s degree as a capital projects specialist at C&I Nations Bank in Atlanta for seven years and was a substitute teacher for various Henry County schools. She was active in the Woodland High School Athletic Boosters Club and in Henry County community activities.


Laura Ann Lewis Owens (85), October 28, 1935, Atlanta, November 11, 2011, Henry County.

Thurso based in Greenville, provides infrastructure for electric vehicles. The company opened an electric charging station in September in Greenville’s West End — the first high-voltage charging station in the state — and Edens is working with a variety of clients, including The Spinx Co., Bon Secours St. Francis Health System, Scourbrite and Meet General Store, to add more. He’s also talking with companies in surrounding states and has plans to be a regional leader in the industry.

Edens says a variety of factors make this the right time for electric vehicles. By 2020, there will be 10 million electric vehicles on the road, and by 2030, there will be 90 million. While many are looking to reduce their environmental impact, the geopolitical aspect of dependence on oil is even more compelling.

Barbara Morris McIsaac (86), October 25, Greenville, S.C. She was a pediatric nurse practitioner with the Christiana Care Health System in Delaware.

Emily Marion Lowder (10), November 3, 2001, Greenville, S.C. He was owner of the Ravenel Bar.

Gordon Thompson, S.C. He traveled on numerous mission trips and was a colossus with various music groups, including the Singing Churchmen of South Carolina. He was a charter member of the Century Men, served as chaplain of Spartan Memorial Hospital, was a past president of the Lions Club, and was a Rotarian. Joseph Daniel Martin, Jr. (87), October 24, Chester, S.C. He was a retired director from Chester Middle School, where he was Teacher of the Year in 1997-98. He was a former band director of Chester High School and Spartanburg Tech School under his leadership the school was the 1977 semi-finalist for the Cherry Blossom Festival National Marching Band competition in Washington, D.C. North Lake State College named him Male of the Year in 1975.

Harrington Lee Gibson (9), November 5, Lancaster, S.C. He was a retired band director with the Chester High School Marching Band and was also the church’s associate pastor and senior adult minister.

Edens’ sister, Erinn Edens, also has an electric vehicle — and she’s driven it to work during the worst economy of her life — and is considering another one. Edens says it’s her dream to build a solar carport that’s tied to an in-home battery electric vehicle.
BRIAN EDENS HAS ALWAYS BEEN FASCINATED by how things work. As a teen, he could pow- er Popular Science magazine and build water wheels and generators with his dad, a fellow tinkerer. Even then, he knew that cars with the typical internal-combustion engines were problematic. “I didn’t think it was sus- tainable long term, and this was before that word became popular,” he says.

When General Motors came out with its first electric vehicle, the EV1, in 1996, Edens followed the story closely and saw how a combination of oil companies, car dealers and other vested interests — plus a general resistance to change — stopped the project in its tracks.

Around that same time, Edens, a 1994 Furman graduate, went on to build a successful career in technology sales, but never lost his interest in the automotive industry and, in particular, the more electric power electric power. Now, he says, the time is right for electric vehicles to take off, and he’s launched a company, Thoro Power Systems, to help make that happen.

Thoro, based in Greenville, provides infrastructure for electric vehicles. The company opened an electric charging station in September in Greenville’s West End — the first high-charge charging station in the state — and Edens is working with a variety of clients, including the Greenville Health System, ScSurfscout and Mast General Store, to add more. He’s also talking with companies in surrounding states and has plans to be a regional leader in the industry.

Edens says a variety of factors make this the right time for the move toward electric and hybrid vehicles. First, he notes, there’s been a real rise in interest in energy and more people are looking to reduce their environmental impact. The geopolitical aspect of dependence on the Middle East for oil has increased interest in fueling alternatives, and last spring’s oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has added to the concern.

“Every single Volt and Leaf made is already sold,” Edens says. “The savings with electric vehicles only begin with the purchase price.”

Moreover, as such, but he is an avid outdoorsman and thinks of himself as a conservationist. “I think resources were put here for us to use, but we need to use them with care.”

While he appreciates the environmental benefits of electric vehicles, he also points to the significant cost savings. He drives a low-speed vehicle, or LVV, the 9.2 miles from his Greenville home to his down- town office each day. Basically a street-legal golf cart, the LVV adds only a few miles to his daily commute and doesn’t use a drop of gas. But he says the savings with electric vehicles only begin with gas. There is no need for oil, oil prices, emissions, radiation, fuel costs, or other costs of car maintenance. All things considered, he says, research shows that it costs about one-third less to drive an electric vehicle.

Edens, who majored in economics at Furman and played football for three years, says his college years prepared him well for his multifaceted career. “A liberal arts education is all about flexibility,” he says. “But especially in something like this, in that there are a lot of different aspects that come together — the technical side, com- puters, social, the environment. Being able to grasp different concepts is something a liberal arts education is all about.”

Although the market for EV charging is a lot of opportunity, Edens doesn’t plan to stick with just one aspect of the business. He recently signed a con- tract to build a solar carport that’s tied to an in-home charging station. Edens says the savings with electric vehicles only begin with the purchase price. “We need to use them with care.”

— LEIGH GAUTHIER SAVAGE

Visit http://furmanpower.com to learn more

Duo set to record CD of unpublished works

AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY during a research trip has led to a recording contract for two young teachers at Claflin University.

Stacey Holliday, a music instructor, accompanist and member of Furman’s Class of 2004, and Meisha Adderley, an assistant professor of music and piano, are developing a CD featuring works by African-American composers. The album is scheduled to be released in the spring of 2012 by Albany Records, a leading producer of classical recordings.

“Many of these works have never been published. We feel they deserve to be heard and enjoyed,” Adderley says.

Holliday (right in photo), who joined the Claflin faculty in 2008, says, "I was very surprised, honestly. Albany Records is extremely prestigious. It was a huge undertaking for us. It’s very exciting.”

After meeting at the Orangeburg, S.C., school in early 2009, the two struck up a friendship and began performing duets. “It’s a rarity to find two classically trained African-American pianists actively performing at the same institution,” Adderley says.

They also began collaborating on research on African-American composers. Their efforts led them to the archives of the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College in Chicago, where they uncovered a store of unpublished works.

Adderley and Holliday decided to record a studio demo of some of their discoveries. Over the last year, they took the music on the road and performed across the country.

Recently they were contacted by Susan Bush, president of Albany Records, who commended them on their choice of repertoire and their "fine playing" on the demo. When she offered the record deal, the Claflin duo happily accepted. Holliday says they have already recorded a significant amount of material.

Solo pieces and duets will be included on the album, which is likely to feature works by, among others, Debiere White, a Chicago-based composer. Adderley describes White’s music as a blend of European, Cuban and African-American influences. Compositions from William Grant Still, the first person of color to conduct a major symphony orchestra, will also be included. Still is often called the dean of African-American composers.

Adderley graduated from Indiana State University and earned her advanced degrees from the University of South Carolina. Holliday earned a master’s and a graduate certificate in piano performance from USC, where she studied collaborative piano. A student of Derek Parsons at Furman, she was a member of the piano faculty at Camp Encore/Coda in Sweden, Maine, in the summers of 2007 and 2008. She was awarded first prize in the 2006 USC piano concerted competition and honorable mention in the 2005 MTNA Steinway Young Artists Competition at the state level.

The author is assistant director of public relations at Claflin.
An Unexpected Discovery

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— Lee Tant

The author is assistant director of public relations at Claflin.
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