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## Brewer's guidance continues to shape students' choices

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## Brewer's guidance continues to shape students' choices

**CHARLES BREWER** has collected a trove 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 during the October inauguration of President Rodney Smolla.

Brewer recently marked his 50th year as a college professor (he's been at Furman since 1967). And at last May's Commencement he received the Alester G. Furman, Jr., and Janie Earle Furman Award for Meritorious Advising, becoming just the second professor to receive both the meritorious teaching and advising awards. Tom Cloer, professor emeritus of education, 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 any other. As a student, you probably felt his demands were unrealistic and his tests were unfair. Looking back, you hope your children are fortunate to have a teacher like Brewer.

"While the students are here they wish I were not so demanding, but when they leave they appreciate that it was challenging. They don't appreciate it so much when they are going through it as they do when they look back on it," says Brewer. "Quite frankly, I've never known professors who have the respect of their students if they give A's and B's for doing no work."

Outside the classroom, Brewer is also well known for mentoring, counseling and encouraging students, and continuing to do so long after they graduate. More than 200 of his former charges have gone on to earn doctorates in psychology.

One of them is Bridgette Martin Hard '01, a faculty member at Stanford University. She

recalls how Brewer pushed her as a student, used his influence to help her gain admission to top graduate schools, and counseled her through professional roadblocks.

"Brewer's mentorship during my four years at Furman paved the way for my success both then and now," she wrote in nominating Brewer for the advising award. "His advice continues to shape my life and my choices."

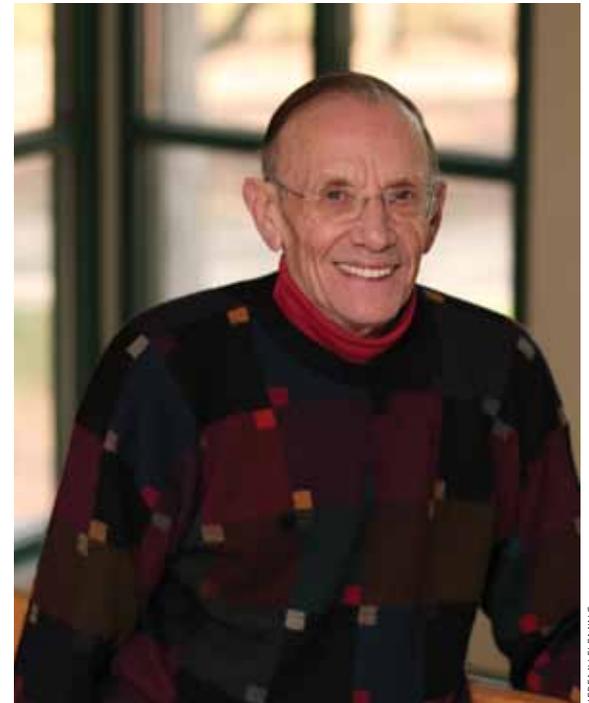
Adrian Ward '08, a Ph.D. student in psychology at Harvard, also nominated Brewer for the award. He wrote that Brewer was "instrumental in helping me explore my interests and advising me on how best to pursue them. He made it clear that he was not only available, but interested — he seemed not to advise because it was his job, but because it was his passion."

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 Furman's president in 1965, he promised to pursue "greatness by national standards." At the time, most Furman faculty members were from the Southeast. Blackwell asked Dean Francis Bonner to cast a wider geographic net in recruiting faculty.

Bonner called Brewer, who at the time was teaching at Elmira College in upstate New York, where he had developed a psychology program and a reputation as an inspirational teacher. "He called me because I had built the program at Elmira," says Brewer.

"When I came to Furman, psychology was not really a department. It had two people. At that time Furman was not known much



JEREMY FLEMING

outside the Southeast. Bonner did more than anyone to improve Furman's academic standing."

In addition to his work at Furman, Brewer has earned national recognition for his contributions to the profession. The American Psychological Foundation presented him its Distinguished Teaching in Psychology Award, and he is a recipient of the American Psychological Association's Distinguished Career Contributions to Education Award. The APA also named its Distinguished Teaching Award in his honor. He serves as the APA delegate to the American Council of Learned Societies.

Now 79, Brewer rises at 4:30 each morning (as he has for five decades), arrives at his office in Johns 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, Johns, Shi and now Smolla. And I plan to outlive the last one."

— JOHN ROBERTS

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