9-1-2010

McArthur was leader in state education circles

Jim Stewart
Furman University

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Recommended Citation
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**Duke Endowment awards $1 million to support sustainability**

**THE DUKE ENDOWMENT has awarded Furman $1 million to support the work of the David E. Shi Center for Sustainability.** The Shi Center promotes the study of sustainability both on campus and in the Greenville community. Located in Cliffs Cottage, it is named in honor of Shi, who retired June 30 after 16 years as president of Furman.

According to The Duke Endowment trust agreement, the money will be used to support the work of the David E. Shi Center for Sustainability.

In all, more than 30 donors have provided support for the Shi Center. Since 2007, Furman has received $113 million toward its sustainability goals, including donations for the construction of Cliffs Cottage and a $2.5 million U.S. Department of Energy grant to install geothermal systems at the North Village apartments on campus.

Furman is one of four educational institutions to receive potential funding from the Duke Endowment. The Endowment seeks to fulfill James B. Duke’s legacy by enriching communities in the Carolinas through higher education, health care, rural churches and children’s services.

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**McArthur was leader in state education circles**

When Laurin Currie McArthur, Jr., died April 4 at the age of 91, he left a legacy of exceptional service to the field of education in South Carolina and at Furman.

The vast majority of his working career was spent as an administrator in the South Carolina public school system, but his obituary stated, “He took great pride in organizing school systems, recruiting and developing bright and talented teachers and administrators, and enriching the lives of countless students.”

He served as an assistant superintendent in Orangeburg County from 1950-53, superintendent of Beaufort School District One from 1953-59, and superintendent of Sumter School District Seventeen from 1959-74, when he retired from public school work.

At the time, Cyril Barbee, state superintendent of education, said, “We have 93 school districts in South Carolina. I wish we had 93 school superintendents like Currie McArthur.”

McArthur, a Navy veteran of World War II, served on an assortment of state, regional and national commissions. He chaired the South Carolina Education Association’s Blue Ribbon Committee on reorganization and the State Superintendent of Education Committee on the improvement of Teacher Certificates in 1960. He was also actively involved in Presbyterian church work.

He was remembered kindly by colleagues in Sumter, where he was superintendent when schools were desegregated. The Sumter newspaper, The Item, reported that the desegregation plan McArthur oversaw was “solved in a manner that the ‘New York Times’ and quoted his former secretary, Julia S. Winters, as saying, ‘He was a strong leader for District Seventeen and introduced new levels of learning’”

In 1974, McArthur came to Furman to develop a school leadership program. Harold Hicks, his colleague in the education department, says, “He brought a tremendous amount of real world experience with him, and he laid the foundation for the program on which others were disproportionately built.”

During his nine years on the faculty McArthur was well known for his outgoing personality, charity nature and gentle manner. Nelly Hacker, current department chair, recalls one of her first conversations with McArthur after she arrived at Furman, in which he emphasized how important it was for her, as a new faculty member, to invest herself immediately in the work of the department.

“He had a fairly way with him, but it wasn’t paternalistic,” she says. “He was very warm and courteous, the epitome of a Southern gentleman. He met my parents once when they visited, and after that he would never fail to ask me how they were doing. Those kinds of personal touches were typical of Currie.”

McArthur also earned a doctorate from Columbia University, had a reputation as an exceptional conversationalist — but, as Hacker says, “He was also a great listener.” Harris says he was “full of stories and ideas” and recalls one discussion in particular when he began by telling her “Anne (his wife is going to call me in a little while, because sometimes I talk too much) and Anne told me that morning that I shouldn’t keep you very long. So I told her to call me when she thought I should stop talking.”

“Sure enough,” Harris says, “Anne called after about an hour. Currie then asked me if I thought he’d talked too long, and I said no, not at all. So he told me, ‘Ann OK right now. Call me in another hour.’ “

Harris adds, “Currie left quite a legacy, and Anne was a significant part of it.”

In addition to his wife, McArthur is survived by sons Laurin Currie McArthur III (Nancy) and John Barron McArthur (Barbara Howe McArthur ‘78), daughter Sally McArthur Shigley ’79 (Ken ’78), six grandchildren, and a brother.

— JIM STEWART