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Share your stories about your Furman Heroes

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THE LAST WORD



Share your stories about your Furman Heroes

Look up the word “hero” in Merriam-Webster’s on-line dictionary and one definition jumps out: “An object of extreme admiration and devotion.”

Now, think back on your Furman years.

It’s likely that most if not all of us have a Furman hero, or even heroes — those people without whom our college experience would not have been the same, whose words of wisdom still resonate, and who we will always admire and appreciate for their devotion to students’ best interests. Whether you’re talking about a brief moment of inspiration or a pattern of assistance and support that spanned your college career, stories abound about the influence of Furman teachers and mentors on our lives.

There’s the professor whose advice, counsel or tough love helped you discover what your strengths were . . . the administrator or staff member who listened, reached out and provided a helping hand (or maybe just a shoulder to cry on) . . . the coach who saw your potential and gave you a chance to show what you could do on the playing field.

A few brief examples: The university’s previous two presidents, John Johns and David Shi, have spoken eloquently of the importance to their lives and careers

of history professors D.H. Gilpatrick and Bill Leverette, respectively. One need only attend the biennial Furman Singers reunion concerts to see the influence such individuals as DuPre Rhame and Bing Vick have had on generations of Furman students.

Hundreds of alumni who worked in Collegiate Educational Service Corps (now Heller Service Corps) continue to be inspired by the example of Betty Alverson, the group’s founder and longtime director, who was a model of leadership and support. Others credit Benny Walker, former vice president for enrollment and director of financial aid, with keeping them in school by working tirelessly to help them find the funding they needed. Tales abound about Marguerite Chiles, a student services administrator for almost four decades who opened her heart, home and office to everyone.

Stories about these and so many others deserve to be preserved for posterity, because in the end Furman is not about books, or classes, or papers, or exams. It’s about people.

So we’re asking you to draw on the skills you developed in freshman composition, write down your “Furman Hero” story, and send it to us.

We’re hoping this idea will draw the kind of interest that the “Six-Word Memoirs” inspired for the Fall 2009 issue, when we received more than 275 responses. This time, though, you’re not limited to six words. Tell your story in 50 words or 500 — whatever it takes.

Assuming a strong response, we’ll use selected stories in an article in a future issue (or issues) of the magazine. And we’ll post all of them on the Alumni Association website (<http://alumni.furman.edu>).

You can e-mail your “Furman Hero” story to jim.stewart@furman.edu or alumni@furman.edu, fax it to (864) 294-3023, or send it by snail mail to *Furman* magazine, Office of Marketing and Public Relations, Furman University, Greenville, S.C. 29613.

We look forward to receiving your submissions — and to stories that will entertain, enlighten and inspire.

— JIM STEWART '76, editor

Photos, from left: DuPre Rhame, Betty Alverson, D.H. Gilpatrick, Bill Leverette, Marguerite Chiles.