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## Greetings from your new Alumni Association President

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## GREETINGS FROM YOUR NEW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT .....

It is with much pride and humility that I write my first column as president of the Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Pride that, after my generally unimpressive stint as a sociology major at Furman, I would even be allowed on the board, much less serve as president.

And humility, as I follow in the larger than life footsteps of Randy Blackwell '63, who died last spring before completing his term as president.

With every project the board pursues over the next two years, we will ask ourselves the same question: Would Randy be proud of this? I can only hope that I can bring the same enthusiasm and passion to the job as Randy did.

Furman is facing some very real challenges right now — the economy, for one, and the retirement of the most excellent David Shi and transition to new leadership. However, Albert Einstein once said that in the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity.

I had the chance to serve on the university's Presidential Search Committee and was inspired by both the dedication of the committee to find just the right person and the incredible credentials of the candidates. Those of us on the committee believe that the Furman community will be extremely pleased with our new president, Rodney Smolla.

Of course, if you are taking the time to read this, you must love Furman as much as I do. If that is indeed the case, I would encourage you to give back to the university in any way you can.

Your contributions don't necessarily have to be

monetary, although my friends in the development office tell me that money is always in good taste. But there are many other effective ways to give back to alma mater — like attending your class reunion, joining a Furman Club, or serving as a Furman advocate for prospective students.

One area that's close to my heart is working with students. Many alumni take the time to mentor students, offer career advice and arrange internships for them. I've worked with a number of Furman students over the years and have been amazed by their talent, insight and contributions.

*[Editor's note: Clare Morris was honored at Homecoming 2009 with the Wayne and Rubye Reid Award for contributions to students' career development.]*

**LET ME FILL YOU IN** on my background and credentials. I'm a 1983 graduate, and back in the day I served as the marketing and communications director for the South Carolina Department of Commerce

With three colleagues from Commerce, I started the Clare Morris Agency in Columbia, S.C., in April 2006. We specialize in helping companies and organizations work to make South Carolina more competitive in the knowledge economy. Our president is another Furman product, Jessica Marsh Daly '94.

During our first three years we've done well, earning three awards from the S.C. Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators for excellence in communications strategy and execution. Our past and present client list includes the Riley Institute at Furman, Boeing, the Medical

University of South Carolina and the National Hydrogen Association. Visit our Web site, [www.claremorrisagency.com](http://www.claremorrisagency.com).

On the home front, I'm the proud mother of Roe, a junior at Furman, and Andrew (16), a drummer for a Blink182 cover band called My Losing Season. I'm also a fitness fanatic, having recently completed two triathlons, and I'm involved in animal rescue efforts with Project Pet in Columbia.

As the Alumni Board works to formulate our vision and plans for the next two years, we welcome your input as to how we can better serve the more than 25,000 former students who call Furman alma mater. If you have thoughts and concerns, please e-mail [clare@claremorrisagency.com](mailto:clare@claremorrisagency.com).

**IN CLOSING**, I wanted to offer a quick note about Homecoming 2009. Among the "Golden Paladins" who returned to the "new" campus in October to reminisce about days of yore were Jose Vargas of Garrett Park, Md., and John T. James of Charlottesville, Va., both members of the Class of '44. They made the long trek south with their wives to celebrate their 65th reunion. Despite the less than stellar weather, they report that they had a wonderful time.

And Harry Baumgardner '39 of Greenville, who played on the last football team to beat Clemson, was on campus for his 70th reunion. He brought some memorabilia with him — including a picture of him with Furman Bisher '38, the legendary sports writer for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. (See page 39.)

Would that we all could have the opportunity — and energy — to return to Furman almost three-quarters of a century after graduating!

— CLARE FOLIO MORRIS