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Went in Dumb. Came out Smart.

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Went in Dumb.

We admit it. We stole the idea for this story.

Three years ago *SMITH Magazine*, an on-line publication, took the concept of a six-word memoir — asking people to describe their lives in six words — and ran with it. The result was two best-selling books (so far) and a Web site, www.smithmag.net, devoted to people's six-word stories and more.

If it worked for them, we reasoned, it might work for us. So in our spring issue, we asked you to send us your six-word Furman memoirs.

We did so despite feeling a bit uneasy. Although we had received encouraging feedback when we posed the idea to the Young Alumni Council and the Alumni Association Board of Directors, we wondered: What if no one responds? Would it prove, once and for all, that nobody reads the magazine?

The good news: Our worst fears were not realized. We were flooded with memoirs — 277, in fact (a number of people sent multiple entries), from graduates spanning the years 1942 to 2009. We also heard such comments as “My roommates and I got together this weekend and came up with a bunch” and “My friends and I have been e-mailing memoirs back and forth.”

So evidently plenty of folks had fun with the idea.

Those who actually sent memoirs to the magazine touched on a host of topics. Receiving more than a few mentions were the Furman Singers, the “Shack” at Greenville Woman's College, dining hall food, and (surprise) the heavy academic load.

Came out Smart.



We asked, and you responded enthusiastically. Herewith, a selection of six-word memoirs . . .

Some memoirs required explanations. From Bryan McKown '71, we got "Rats riot, Ernie reads riot act." (Freshmen were known as Rats at the time.) McKown included a note saying, "The Rat Riot took place in the fall of 1967 and was instrumental in softening Furman's longstanding hazing practices, at least for the men. Ernie Harrill [then dean of students] threatened to expel the residents of E-Dorm *en masse*. In later years he and I laughed about it on more than one occasion."

Hmmm. Could be a "remember when?" story for a future issue.

Nancy Blackwell Bourne '62 offered, "Furman awaited. Citadel raided. Cadets abated." Her comment: "In the fall of our senior year before the Furman-Citadel game, Citadel cadets decided to invade Furman. Our alumni in Charleston heard of their plans and called Furman to forewarn us." The result was that the cadets were caught after they drove on campus and were made to suffer various indignities before being released to slink back to Charleston. Pat Conroy — holder of an honorary degree from Furman — would immortalize the incident (with embellishments) in his novel *Beach Music*.

V. Scott Bowers '79 had a bit more serious entry: "Concussions not recalled; Belltower continues ringing." He explains that he had "no choice but to quit football due to serial head injuries; however, the damage still lingers."

Nina Baker Martin '42 came up with one of our favorites. During her student days she sparked with James "Pepper" Martin '41, one of Furman's greatest all-time athletes. Her memoir: "Pepper. Fast runner. I caught him." And she's held on ever since.

The most prolific respondent was Phil Creveling '77, whose 53 memoirs ran the gamut of campus life, from "Dining hall worker: Disciplined dishwasher deluxe" to "Coach Cottingham's eyebrows never missed anything." He wrote, "Once I turned my attention back to the 'good old days,' the memories came flooding back in torrents. I could have made a list five times as long but I was afraid of cramping my fingers and revealing more about myself than I care to share while still alive and kicking."

Choosing which memoirs to include was a difficult task. We wish we could publish them all, but space dictated that we narrow the field. (Read more memoirs at the Alumni Association home page, <http://alumni.furman.edu>.)

The following pages feature a selection of memoirs designed to give you a taste of what we received. If this article sparks a second round of submissions, we'll do a follow-up at some point.

For now, we thank all who took the time to remember and share. We hope the exercise was as much fun for you as it was for us.

And one final shout-out: to Doug Roosa '78, whose memoir is the title of this article.

— JIM STEWART

Maybe I should have studied more.

Carter-Wallace '09

Major changed thrice. Countless late nights.

Michelle Pugh '05

Snajort, Wien, CHIC: Did I study?

Anne Reynolds '78

Other hippies left before I finished.

Deborah Lynn Dickerson '73 (graduated '78)

Transferred out in '79. Something stayed.

Pam Cochran Kirkwood '81



From GWC to Furman between classes.

June Mills Campbell '46

Thursdays: mutton dinners at the Zoo.

Betty Tyson Rhame '46

Relished Furman days! Daughter there now.

Marcia Weatherly James '74

Had to shout, "Man on hall!"

Page Acree Robertson '64

Bright red lipsticks. Little white gloves.

Cheney Carter Tilman '45

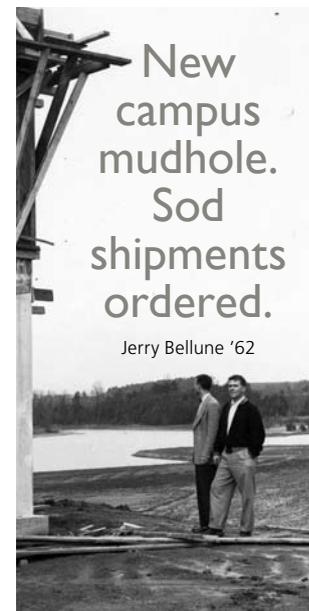


Bus rides between campuses every hour.

Mildred Freeland Finch '51

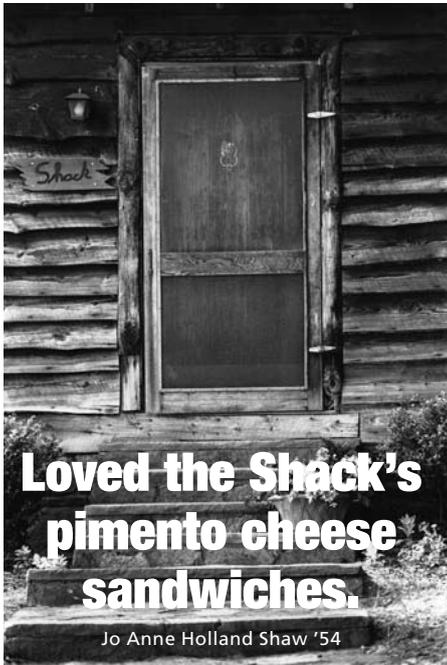
New campus mudhole. Sod shipments ordered.

Jerry Bellune '62



Lucky to matriculate, Luckyer to graduate.

Jim Martin '73



Loved the Shack's
pimento cheese
sandwiches.

Jo Anne Holland Shaw '54

Shack's
bargain:
Coke and
crackers,
dime.

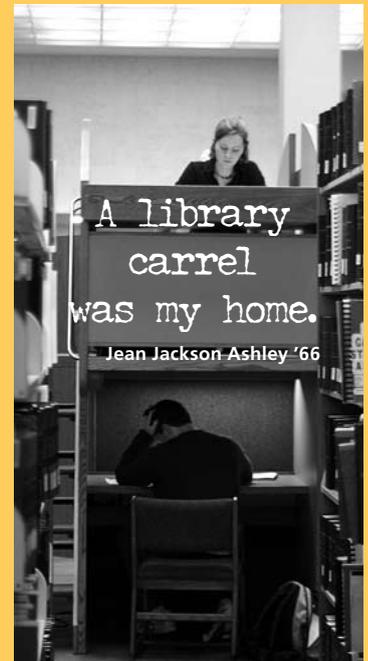
Eleanor Sompayrac
Anderson '49

College
comfort food:
PalaDen
grilled cheese.

Jennie Brown Wyatt '94

Felicity
Ultimately
Realized,
Mental
Appetite
Nourished.

Hershal Pleasant '01



A library
carrel
was my home.

Jean Jackson Ashley '66

INSPIRED TO GREATNESS. CONTENT WITH HAPPINESS.

Megan Foote Monsky '99

TOO MUCH BASKETBALL;
NOT ENOUGH DATES.

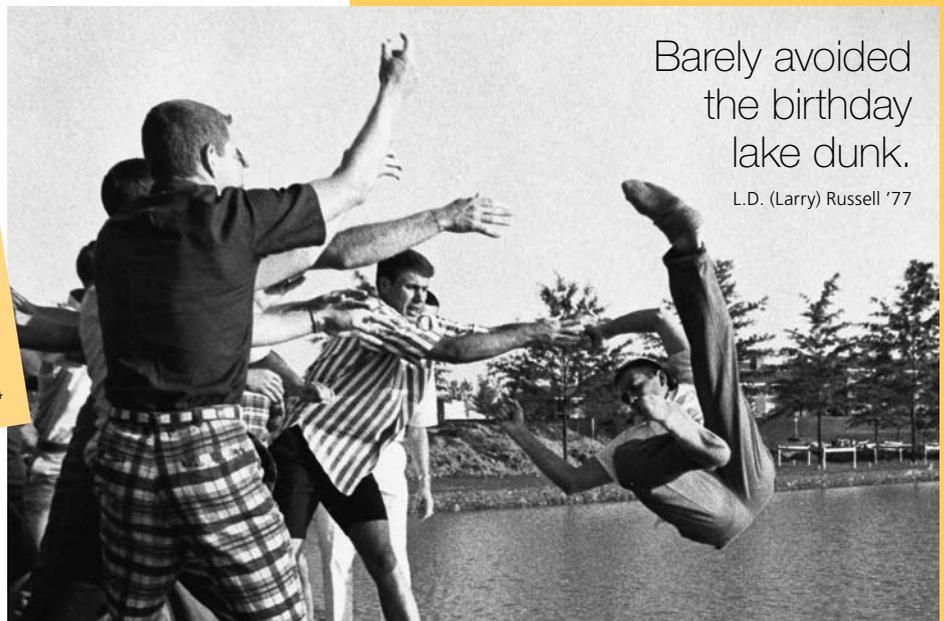
Robert Archer '92

Banana
milkshake.
Onion
rings.
The 'Bow.

Anna Jones '74

Birthday.
Twin in lake.
I'm NEXT!!

Pam Weatherly Carter '74



Barely avoided
the birthday
lake dunk.

L.D. (Larry) Russell '77

Nine holes after dinner, barefoot. Heaven!

Phil Creveling '77

Dean Bonner really was my friend!

Bob Thompson '60

Drank the booze. Got kicked out!

Marie Fullerton Freeman '65 (left in '63, returned to finish)

Eight years. Evening Studies. Got it!

Ray Hathaway '99

Hey, Dr. Johns, come on down!

Pami Baillie Ballington, MA '94

**Christian atmosphere inspired;
Buddhist promotion dismays.**

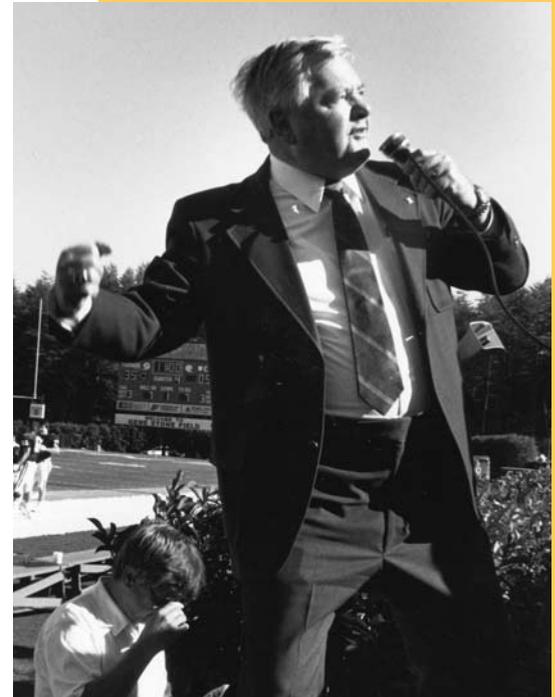
Jane Rhodes Fussell '50

Running to class through horizontal rain.

Jinny Ridgeway Moore '71

Lucky Charms cereal for dinner, again!!

Michelle Rogers Pleasant '99



Expanded my mind. And my hips.

Lisa Stevens Gilford '90

**DELAWARE,
MARSHALL,
IDAHO,
GEORGIA
SOUTHERN,
CHAMPS!**

Robert Hall '89



Taught
by giants;
now
I teach.

Anna King Flournoy '02

**Furman Singers.
Best. Choir. Experience. Ever!**

Beth Schonmeyer Moran '74

Wow, was that an expensive education.

Tracee Minnix Wade '95

**Furman vacuumed
our savings.
Worth it.**

Rich and Halle Holland
(parents of Aleah Holland '09)

Arrived conservative.
Religion major changed everything.

Jessica Miller Kelley '03



Ate baklava in London with Pate.

Ann Woodfin Hodge '77

Prayed some.
Partied lots.
Studied ridiculously.

Laurie Moskow Sepulveda '01

Lily white 'til Joe joined us.

Kirk H. Neely '66



“Mrs. Gilly, English Lit. Crowning glory.”

Betty Miller Lay '48

What goes on in Plyler Hall? Lisa Couch Williams '95

How many CLPs do I need?
Found my home.
Did first play.
Rendall David Cook '91
David Williams '96

"Dirt is soil out of place!"

Sally Arnold '77

(quoting biology professor Rex Kerstetter)



Reid, Stewart, Crabtree.
Read, teach, love.

Sandy Blackwell Mitchell '65

Congrats on graduating? Wanted to stay.

Kelley Vanderbilt '09