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Five honored with major awards at annual Founders event

Furman University

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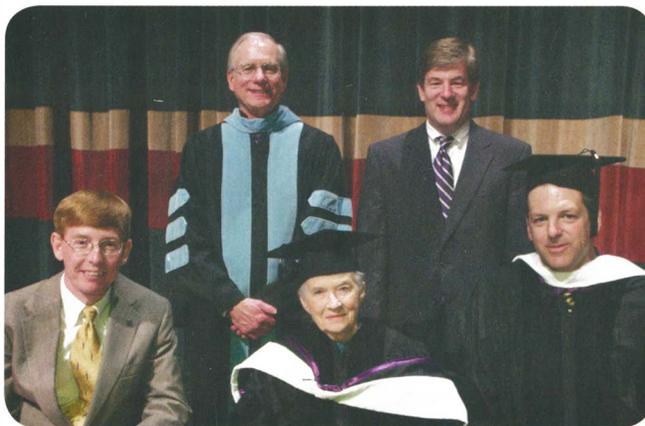
Three alumni, including longtime Furman administrator **Harry Shucker '66**, were joined by two generous friends of the university in receiving special honors March 28 at the annual Founders Convocation.

Shucker, who has worked at Furman since 1968 and will step down in December after 22 years as vice president for student services, received the Chiles-Harrill Award, presented annually to a Furman employee for "substantial contributions to the lives of students." The award is named for Marguerite Chiles and Ernest E. Harrill, former university administrators.

Having worked in admissions, financial aid and student services during his years at Furman, Shucker was recognized for his caring nature, devotion to students' best interests and longtime commitment to the university. A total of 43 letters were received nominating him for the honor, and they came from all constituencies of the university: faculty, staff, current students, parents, and alumni from the past four decades.

The Richard Furman Baptist Heritage Award went to **Tony McDade '79**. Named for the university's founder, the award recognizes a Furman graduate who reflects Baptist ideals by thinking critically, living compassionately and making life-changing commitments.

McDade, a Baptist minister in the Carolinas for more than 20 years, was honored for his "conviction and passion for social justice," his visionary leadership and his "ability to unite and inspire people of all faiths into transformative action." Since 2003 he has been executive director of the Greenville Area Interfaith Hospitality Network (GAIHN), an emergency shelter and transitional housing ministry that works with 28 local congregations to provide shelter, meals and assistance to homeless families in an effort to help them achieve self-sufficiency.



The honorees, from left: Tony McDade '79, Harry Shucker '66, Mary Simms Furman, Neil Rabon '81, Adam Lewis.

Greenville attorney **Neil Rabon '81**, a former head of the Alumni Association, received the Bell Tower Award for his years of service to Furman and his efforts to preserve the fundamental principles on which the university was founded.

Concerned about the growing threat to Furman from fundamentalist Baptists in the late 1980s and early '90s, Rabon proposed the establishment of an alumni task force to investigate Furman's statutory relationship with the state Baptist convention. Thanks in large part to his foresight and initiative, the task force formulated a legal strategy that eventually enabled Furman to gain its independence from the convention and set in motion an exciting new era in the university's development.

Other top awards went to **Mary Simms Oliphant Furman** of Greenville and **Adam Joseph Lewis** of Aspen, Colo., both of whom received honorary Doctor of Humanities degrees.

Mrs. Furman was recognized for her contributions to the education of thousands of South Carolina students and for her gifts of "time, talent and resources toward Furman."

She is the great-granddaughter of William Gilmore Simms, the South's most prominent antebellum poet, novelist and historian; the daughter of Mary Simms Oliphant, a historian with whom she co-authored several editions of a history of South Carolina, which served as a primary textbook for generations of students; and the wife of Alester Garden Furman III, a member of the university's founding family.

Furman Mall is named for her and her husband in recognition of their extraordinary generosity toward the university, and the central teaching quadrangle in the Charles H. Townes Center for Science will be named in her honor.

Few people can match Adam Joseph Lewis when it comes to environmental philanthropy. He was among the first philanthropists to focus on the development of high-performance buildings designed with sustainability and efficiency in mind, and through his foundation he has supported a number of path-breaking projects in ecological design, education and outreach. He contributed a \$1.5 million challenge grant toward the sustainability systems in the Townes Center.