2006-07 Furman Fellows named; environmental advocates honored

Furman University
During Opening Convocation September 13, Furman recognized the 2006-07 Furman Fellows and awarded honorary Doctor of Humanities degrees to Atlanta businessman Arthur Blank and environmental activist Brad Wyche.

The Furman Fellows awards, first presented in 2005, are $5,000 fellowships given annually to five seniors who have demonstrated creativity, imagination, innovative problem-solving ability, and potential for future success. The awards are made possible through the generosity of Furman trustee Robert Buckman and his wife, Joyce Mollerup.

This year’s Furman Fellows (below, left to right):

> **DAVID SIBLEY, CAMDEN, S.C.**
A chemistry major known for his ability to work effectively with faculty and students alike, David recently redesigned the department’s Web site. He is active in Habitat for Humanity and Canterbury (the Episcopal student community).

> **ASHLEY SISCO, EVANS, G.A.**
Ashley is a music education major who participates in a host of university ensembles. She has exceptional leadership skills, and music faculty praise her imagination and creative approach in all she undertakes.

> **KARTIKEYA SINGH, GREENVILLE.**
Last year, thanks to Kartikeya’s leadership, Furman led all U.S. universities in raising funds to support Oxfam’s “micro credit” fund, which provides loans to poor residents of developing countries. He is a Morris K. Udall Scholar and designed his own major in ecology and sustainable development.

> **MICHAEL VAGNINI, WINTER SPRINGS, FLA.**
A double major in chemistry and Spanish, Michael is a Beckman and Goldwater Scholar and a strong advocate for the environment. He participated in the spring 2005 service-learning trip to Cuba sponsored by the Center for Theological Exploration of Vocation.

> **KEVIN FRAZIER, MAULDIN, S.C.**
Kevin is absent from the photo because he is studying abroad this fall. The theatre arts major has designed lighting schemes for three Furman Theatre productions and has been a resident advisor and a counselor for the Bridges to a Brighter Future program.

In addition, Furman used Opening Convocation to launch the “Year of the Environment” on campus. The university will emphasize environmental citizenship throughout the year through programs, lectures and other events.

In keeping with the theme, Furman awarded honorary degrees to Wyche, a Greenville attorney, and Blank, co-founder of Home Depot and owner of the National Football League’s Atlanta Falcons, who held their summer camp at Furman from 1999 through 2004.

Wyche, co-author of Guide to Environmental Law in South Carolina, is founder of Upstate Forever, a non-profit group that promotes sustainability and land preservation while combating urban sprawl. His father, Greenville attorney Tommy Wyche, received an honorary degree from Furman in 1997.

Blank was honored for his business acumen and civic-mindedness, as the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation supports assorted programs in the arts and education. In 2004, in recognition of construction practices that helped minimize its environmental impact, the Blank Family Office Building was named the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold-certified building in Georgia — and the first gold-certified office building in the Southeast.

The full text of the honorary degree citations is available on-line at http://www.furman.edu/press/pressarchive.cfm?ID=3882.