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Retiring professors represent combined 107 years of service and commitment to university: Asian Studies blossomed under Leavell's leadership

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Asian Studies blossomed under Leavell's leadership

The story goes that in 1974 Furman hired Jim Leavell because the dean at the time, Francis W. Bonner, had on a trip to Japan mistaken Jim for a missionary who had made a strong impression. Whatever the case, Jim Leavell would prove to be one of the most distinguished hires in Dean Bonner's distinguished career.

Jim was Furman's first Asia specialist — a "landmark appointment," in the words of Ed Jones, his former history department colleague. Jim taught courses cross-listed in four departments (history, Asian Studies, art, religion) and has been one of the university's most popular professors. Over his 32-year career he was twice named the student government's teacher of the year, and in 1996 he received the Alester G. Furman, Jr., and Janie Earle Furman Award for Meritorious Teaching.

A passionate advocate for expanding the global scope of the university's curriculum, Jim was instrumental in developing the Asian Studies major and chaired the department from 1995 to 2000. Today Furman has the largest Asian Studies department of any undergraduate college in the South, thanks in large part to Jim's efforts.

His leadership in promoting international understanding has extended beyond Furman. In 1979 he founded the South Carolina International Consortium and was its president for almost 10 years. He is a past president of the Southeast Regional Conference of the Association of Asian Studies and has had a long and rewarding involvement with ASIANetwork, the largest Asia-related consortium in North America. In 2000 he received a grant to launch the South Carolina Center for Teaching about Asia, a program geared toward high school teachers. He has directed the program since its inception and will continue to do so.

During the early 1970s, while a Fulbright Scholar in Japan, Jim, an active outdoorsman, was invited to participate in an intense religious pilgrimage with a group of Buddhist mountain Shugendo ascetics. He took up the offer, braving treacherous mountain paths and icy waters, because he realized the opportunity would combine two things he truly loves — investigation of religious practice and long-distance hiking.

This experience sparked in him a fascination with pilgrims and pilgrimages that would inspire him to walk routes in China, Tibet, India, Egypt and Palestine. His wife, Judy, herself a valued Furman employee for many years, often accompanied Jim on these expeditions. She will join him again this fall as he concludes his Furman career in Spain, where he plans to lead Furman students along the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage.

Jim Leavell has had few equals at Furman. We will miss his calm, reasoned approach, sage advice and Texas charm, but his impact on his colleagues and students will endure, for years to come.

— Sam Britt '72, *Asian Studies/Religion*

Shi to take sabbatical; 10 new trustees named

The board of trustees has approved a sabbatical for president David Shi that will begin in mid-September and run through mid-May.

Tom Kazee, vice president for academic affairs and dean, will serve as acting president in Shi's absence. Linda Boone Bartlett, associate academic dean, will serve as acting dean of the faculty.

During his sabbatical, Shi plans to work on the eighth edition of his *America: A Narrative History* (W.W. Norton), the nation's best-selling history textbook, and to design a freshman seminar that he plans to teach upon his return. He will also continue his duties as chair of the board of directors of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

NAICU, with nearly 1,000 members nationwide, is the unified national voice of independent higher education, representing private colleges and universities on such policy issues as student aid, taxation and government regulation.

Seven alumni are among the 10 new trustees who joined the board July 1.

Two of the new class of trustees, Angela Walker Franklin '81 and Gordon Herring '65, have previous experience on the board. Franklin is vice dean and associate vice president of academic and student affairs at the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, and Herring is a Greenville investor and a former chair of the board.

Those who will begin their first terms are Greenville attorney Merl Code; Ed Good '67, a Greenville developer; Francie Heller, a businesswoman from Greenwich, Conn.; Celeste Hunt Patrick '77 of Charleston, S.C., associate professor of pediatrics at the Medical University of South Carolina; Greenville businessman Linton "Buddy" Puckett '65; Dudley Reynolds '75 of Birmingham, Ala., president and chief operating officer of Alabama Natural Gas Corporation; Stewart Spinks, a Greenville businessman; and Lizanne Thomas '79, an attorney in Atlanta.

Carl Kohrt '65, president and CEO of Battelle Memorial Institute in Columbus, Ohio, is the new chair of the board. Greenville attorney Kathy McKinney is vice chair, and Emily Sanders of Greenville is secretary.

Board members who completed their terms this year are Atlanta attorneys Randy Eaddy '76 and Jim Ney '64; Greenville businessman Carroll Rushing; Martha Stoddard Selonick '72, a physician from Baltimore, Md.; Elizabeth Peace Stall, a civic leader in Greenville; and Kemmons Wilson, a businessman from Memphis, Tenn.

The trustees have also voted to name the Alumni Service Award in honor of the late Gordon Lyles Blackwell, Sr. The award is presented at the annual Homecoming breakfast to recognize outstanding service to alma mater. Blackwell, a 1960 Furman graduate who served as a trustee and as president of the Alumni Association, died March 13.