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## Capital support

Furman University

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## Capital support

*Science complex taking shape with help of major commitments*

**W**ith groundbreaking for the new science complex set for this spring, Furman has received three major capital commitments to support the planned \$58 million effort.

The project received its biggest boost to date in January in the form of a \$3 million grant from the Marshall E. Rinker, Sr. Foundation of West Palm Beach, Fla. The gift, one of the largest in Furman history, will provide, furnish and endow the north hall, which will serve as the entry way to the complex and will be named Marshall E. and Vera Lea Rinker Hall.

The north hall is one of two new buildings included in the construction plan, which also provides for the renovation of Plyler Hall, the current science building. Through January, a total of \$11.1 million had been pledged or committed to the science project.

The Marshall E. Rinker, Sr. Foundation is named for the late Marshall Edison “Doc” Rinker, Sr., an Indiana native who went to Palm Beach County at 21 and enjoyed a successful business career.

David Rinker, chairman and president of the foundation, says, “Our foundation, started by my father, has always been committed to supporting education. We recognize Furman’s commitment to academic excellence and are delighted to continue to provide support.”

David Rinker and his wife, Leighan, are generous Furman supporters. Both served on the Parents Council (three of their children are alumni), and Leighan is in her second term on the board of trustees, which she chaired from 2002 to 2004. Furman awarded her an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree in 2004.

The Rinkers created the Partners Scholarship Program at Furman, and in 2000 the Rinker Foundation pledged

\$1.4 million toward the expansion and renovation of the James B. Duke Library. That gift funded the Marshall E. and Vera Lea Rinker Multimedia Commons.

In addition to the Rinker Foundation grant, two Furman couples — Carl and Lynne Kohrt and Charles and Celeste Patrick — have made gifts of \$1 million each toward the science project.

The complex’s central commons will be named for the Kohrts. Carl Kohrt ’65, vice chair of the Furman board of trustees, majored in chemistry and went on to earn a doctorate from the University of Chicago. He is president and chief executive officer of Battelle Memorial Institute in Columbus, Ohio, a non-profit institution that focuses on technology development and commercialization. Before joining Battelle in 2001, he spent 29 years as a senior executive with Kodak.

Lynne Kohrt is a graduate of the University of Illinois and has been a teacher and business owner. The Kohrts are longtime supporters of the Summer Undergraduate Research Program and of the Richard Furman Society.

“Furman invested in me, and Lynne and I have benefited from that investment,” Carl says. “We feel an obligation to provide a return on that investment. We try to support institutions that have inspired leadership, a compelling vision, a realistic plan for achieving that vision, and a track record of accomplishments. We strongly believe Furman has all of these attributes.”

Charles and Celeste Hunt Patrick of Charleston, S.C., are known for their generosity and civic engagement. Their \$1 million gift will fund an 80-seat lecture hall that will bear their name.

Celeste Patrick ’77 is a physician and associate professor of pediatrics at the Medical University of South

Carolina, as well as a real estate developer. She is a member of Furman’s Advisory Council and Science Advisory Board. Her husband, who graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1976, is a senior partner with the law firm of Richardson, Patrick, Westbrook and Brickman.

The Patricks were inspired to make their gift after visiting the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Valencia, Spain. “In the museum, there is a wonderful section devoted to the invention of the laser,” Charles says. “We saw remarkable pictures and read fascinating descriptions of how Charles Townes, the Furman graduate and Nobel laureate, laid the foundation for development of the laser, which is perhaps the greatest invention of the 20th century.

“When we saw how a sciences graduate from Furman could have such a profound impact on modern society, we were convinced that a gift to Furman may allow history to repeat itself.”

In addition to the Rinker, Kohrt and Patrick commitments, a seminar room in the science complex will be named for Lloyd and Joy Batson in recognition of the significant contributions the Pickens, S.C., couple has made to the university. The Lloyd Ellis Batson and Joy Barrick Batson Seminar Room will be funded by gifts from friends and members of the Batson family.

Lloyd, a 1947 Furman graduate, is former pastor of First Baptist Church of Pickens, which he served for 33 years. Known for his extensive civic and denominational service, he is a past chair of the Furman board and has been a trustee under Furman’s last four presidents. He is currently a trustee emeritus. Furman presented him an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in 1987 and the Alumni Service Award in 1988.