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A tribute: Larry Kessler, 1950-2005

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A tribute: Larry Kessler, 1950-2005

Preparing to meet new freshman advisees this September, I walked to my colleague Sandy Roberson's office to ask about a change in the advising procedures. Before asking, I observed, "Larry would know this." Sandy agreed and confessed that she had "jumped up" several times in the last few weeks to ask Larry a question, only to realize, still in disbelief, that Larry, the one we could depend on, had left us.

Those of us who teach economics, business and accounting at Furman feel Larry Kessler's absence daily as we enter Hipp Hall. Larry, who died August 20 at the age of 55, was here when most of us arrived. Indeed, many of us were "recruited" by Larry. Impressed by his dedication to undergraduate teaching and his penchant for accuracy and detail, we were proud to become his colleagues.

Larry's academic record — high school valedictorian, B.S. *summa cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa at Lehigh, M.B.A. California, Ph.D. University of Texas, four years on the faculty at Duke, 25 years teaching accounting at Furman — was impressive, but his real influence on everyone was by example and friendship.

At the end of my first year at Furman, I asked Larry about a member of the English faculty who had made a presentation several months earlier. Without hesitation he said, "That was Lynne Shackelford, she is real southern, you wouldn't like her."

For once Larry was wrong, and the following spring he accepted his error graciously and even agreed to be a groomsman at our wedding. Lynne gave Larry the task of seeing that I had something to eat before the 2 o'clock ceremony. Around 12:30, Larry literally marched me to a fast food restaurant and, as I ordered a hamburger and fries, he interrupted, "No fries. You don't want grease on your shirt." Typical of Larry, you could count on him to take any assignment seriously, and do it better and more thoroughly than anyone expected.

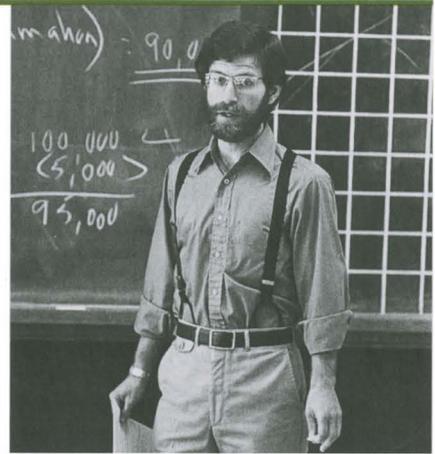
Larry was critical and complimentary. If a job that could and should have been done right wasn't, he would let you know. However, if you did something well or significant, he would be the first to acknowledge your achievement. He was, as Linda Julian, another faculty member who left us too soon, once said, "a pain in the ass, but a lovable pain in the ass."

Colleague Cheryl Patterson says,

"We all counted on his meticulous record-keeping, his attention to detail, and his insight. I don't know anyone who knew Furman policy as well as he did. A side of him that was probably not well known was his concern and thoughtfulness for colleagues. He always noticed if I was not feeling up to par or seemed preoccupied with some problem."

Says Susan Zeiger of the administrative staff, "I will miss Larry and his watchful and gentle guidance. He would always prepare for committee meetings by reading all the materials and reviewing the topic at hand thoroughly, including content, grammar and protocol, and always from the perspective of what was best for the faculty and staff. Larry was one of the few people who looked past my personnel director title and saw me as a person — asking me how I was doing, acknowledging the work that I did, and saying thank you."

Linda Bartlett offers the following: "As assistant and then associate academic dean, I conferred with Larry frequently about student and policy issues. He always impressed me with his concern for the well-being of individual students and for the fairness and integrity of our policies. He never hesitated to question our practices if he had concerns about them, and he also never hesitated to compliment me about things he thought were done well. Any praise from Larry was special,



because I knew he had the highest of standards."

She speaks for many of us as she says, "I will miss him very much — for his professionalism, his attention to detail, his conscientiousness, his kindness, and most of all for his humanity. It's hard to imagine Furman without Larry Kessler."

Well said, Linda, and well done, Larry. We trust you are at peace.

— Bruce Brown
Professor of Economics

The Department of Business and Accounting is working to establish the Larry Kessler Scholarship and/or Award for Excellence in Accounting. Contributions should be made to the Kessler Fund c/o the Development Office, Furman University, 3300 Poinsett Highway, Greenville, S.C. 29613.

Raymond Heatwole, 1918-2005

Raymond W. Heatwole, who taught economics at Furman for almost 30 years, died July 11 at the age of 86.

A native of Dayton, Va., he earned his bachelor's and graduate degrees from the University of Virginia. He taught at Furman in 1941-42, then served in the U.S. Army from 1942 to 1946. He returned after World War II and taught at Furman until 1972. In 1959 he was named director of Furman's evening community college program, a position he held until 1970.

Besides Furman, he also taught at Virginia Commonwealth, James Madison and Washington & Lee.

Heatwole, who retired from the military with the rank of major, was a charter member of the Army Transportation Association and of the American Accounting Association, Southern Economics Association and American Economics Association. He was listed in *Who's Who in the South and Southwest* and *American Men of Science*.

He is survived by his daughter, Linda Heatwole Jacobs '74, and her husband, Richard Jacobs; two grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Memorials to support scholarships in business may be sent to the Development Office, Furman University, 3300 Poinsett Highway, Greenville, S.C. 29613.

