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Commitment and leadership

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Commitment and leadership

Few can match Bet Fant's generous spirit, work ethic

I began my job as associate director of annual giving at Furman on October 1, 2004. Two days later I met Elizabeth "Bet" Fant '69.

It quickly became apparent that Bet was a fiercely loyal supporter of her alma mater. As we talked, I realized that her sense of commitment to Furman was likely instilled in her by her late father, George A. Fant '33. The two often visited Furman together, attending Homecoming, athletic events and other activities.

The better I got to know Bet, the more I realized what a big heart and passionate personality she has. For over the past eight years, Bet, a retired teacher, has rescued scores of animals and housed them at her home in nearby Belton, S.C. People in the area quickly learned that Bet was the person to call if they needed to find a good home for a pet or stray.

When I visited her home this spring, I was amazed by the care and special attention she lavishes on her animals — 30 cats, a horse and more than 70 dogs. She treats them much like she would a room full of students, with care, patience

and unconditional affection. The animals are happy, healthy and active; Bet sees to their medical and nutritional needs and is even installing heated doghouses for the winter months. Their living environment is clean, neat and roomy.

Bet also exhibits a tireless work ethic in her volunteer efforts for Furman. Because 2004 was the 35th reunion year for her class, she issued a challenge to her classmates in memory of her father. She pledged \$10,000 to Furman if her class could raise \$69,000 by February 22, 2005, which happened to be her birthday. In addition to her \$10,000 pledge, she would add another \$100 for any member of the class who made a donation this year after not making one last year.

Bet made many phone calls to encourage her classmates to participate. And they did, in an extraordinary way. By February 22 the Class of '69 had raised \$177,191 and increased its giving participation rate by almost 9 percent.

Bet Fant is a shining example of the outstanding alumni leadership Furman is fortunate to have. Her enthusiasm proved



Bet Fant '69 donated this bench through the "Branches and Benches" program. Located in front of the James B. Duke Library, it honors her father.

contagious, and her generous spirit and hard work inspired the Class of '69 to new heights.

And there's one other thing that tells you what kind of person Bet is: She even wrote thank you notes to every classmate that made a gift!

— **Clint Hill '03**

Associate Director; Annual Giving

Hollingsworth Initiative proves a boon to top gift societies

John D. Hollingsworth spent most of his life inventing ways to make complicated processes more efficient, because he knew the importance of operating a business with ease and precision. Under his direction the company he founded, Hollingsworth on Wheels, became one of the world's leading manufacturers of metallic carding machines used to separate textile fibers.

John D. Hollingsworth was also a member of Furman's Class of '39 who, upon his death in late 2000, left his multi-million-dollar estate to the Hollingsworth Funds, Inc., a non-profit organization. He directed that 45 percent of the annual net income from the Hollingsworth Funds' assets be distributed to Furman each year, with the remainder of the annual income going to the Greenville County YMCA and to local charities.

This year, Furman and the Hollingsworth Funds' board of directors agreed to apply a portion of the proceeds from this bequest toward encouraging higher levels of support to the university. No doubt Mr. Hollingsworth would be delighted to know that the Hollingsworth Initiative, as the program is called, has produced an outstanding response from alumni and friends, especially at the \$10,000 Richard Furman Society level. With the help of the Hollingsworth Initiative, the Richard Furman Society has grown to more than 100 members.

Why is it easier than ever to join a top gift society? Here's

my personal example: I was a member of the \$1,000 Presidents Club for several years, but because of family concerns and other obligations, I had not felt comfortable about moving to another level. Once I learned about the Hollingsworth Initiative, however, it was clear that this was an easy way for me to move to the \$2,500 Trustees Circle level.

I made a three-year pledge of \$1,250, \$1,875 and \$2,500. The Hollingsworth Initiative augments the first two years of my pledge by providing half the balance this year and a third of the balance next year. I'll pay the full balance in 2006-07. By making a three-year pledge, I have time to plan my finances and can choose the month in which I'll make my payment.

As chair of the Annual Giving Council I am elated to report that as of this writing, six recent alumni from the Class of '02 and one from '03 have joined the Presidents Club this year through the Hollingsworth Initiative. For the year, a total of 172 donors have joined a leading gift society. We invite you to join us!

— **Rosanne Batson Patton '81**

To find out more about the Hollingsworth Initiative, visit the Furman Web at www.furman.edu/giving, e-mail Wayne King, director of annual giving, at wayne.king@furman.edu, or call him at (864) 294-3474.