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Book Marks

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BOOK MARKS

Featuring summaries of books written by Furman faculty and alumni, as well as reviews of books recommended by faculty and staff as "good reads."

FROM ALUMNI

George Singleton '80, *Why Dogs Chase Cars* (Algonquin, 2004). The publisher says, "To be consistently funny is a great gift, but to be funny and cynical and empathetic all at the same time is George Singleton's special gift." In his latest story collection, Singleton, who was profiled in the Winter 2003 issue of *Furman* magazine, chronicles the life and times of Mendal Dawes of Forty-Five, S.C., and his relationship with his eccentric father. *Booklist* says, "Mendal's growing pains, while universal, are treated with freshness and Eli Whitney-like inventiveness. . . . Singleton creates a dead-on portrait of the way we carry our childhoods into adulthood and how, despite vows to leave small towns, we can end up back home, still running, like stray dogs hoping a passing car will stop and give us a ride somewhere else."

Robert Whitlow '76, *Life Everlasting* (WestBow Press, 2004). This is the fifth legal thriller from Whitlow, a lawyer in Charlotte, N.C., who was profiled in the Winter 2004 issue of *Furman* magazine. Called the "John Grisham of the Christian fiction market," he is a winner of the Christy Award, given by the Christian Booksellers Association for outstanding fiction. *Life Everlasting* is set in Charleston, S.C., where, in the publisher's words, "deadly mysteries and legal twists unfold. . . . Whitlow confidently weaves romance and mystery into this signature and suspenseful legal thriller." The book is a sequel to *Life Support*, released in 2003.

Lucinda Secrest McDowell '74, *What We've Learned So Far* (Life Journey/Cook Communications, 2004). Author of five books and contributor to many others, McDowell asked leading Christian women authors and speakers to offer their thoughts on the topic of turning 50. The publisher says this compilation "was created for every woman who wants to boldly look to the future and invest in the lives of others while creating a legacy of love." McDowell runs a Connecticut-based ministry and has extensive experience in publishing, speaking and radio broadcasting. Visit her Web site, www.encouragingwords.net.

Tom Rybolt '76, *Forbidden Light* (Creative Arts Book Company, 2004). The author is a chemistry professor at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga. His novel focuses on Ben Barnes, a graduate student at Atlanta Institute of Technology who discovers a formula that could solve the world's energy problems — but could also disrupt the energy industry. Barnes faces assorted crises, including two explosions, mysterious problems with his graduate placement exams and an encounter with a runaway Mercedes. *Booklist* says, "This kind of old-fashioned scientific romance doesn't grow on bushes these days, and Rybolt does it well enough not to have to worry, one would think, about publishing his next yarn."

Barbara Pasco Laymon '76, *The Devil's Inbox* (Augsburg Books, 2004). The publisher describes this book, which chronicles the efforts of a devilish advisor and a "tempter-in-training" to influence a young woman's life, as "an

insightful, informative, and clever survey of the Christian life." In style, the book is said to emulate *The Screwtape Letters*. The author received her undergraduate degree in mathematics-computer science and later earned a master's degree in public health. She is a student of theology and a community health planner in Chattanooga, Tenn.

J. Elizabeth Miller '79, Bron Ingoldsby and Suzanne Smith, *Exploring Family Theories* (Roxbury Press, 2004). Miller, an associate professor of family and child studies at Northern Illinois University, joined with her co-authors to compile this text, the first of its kind designed expressly for undergraduates. The book integrates theory, research and application while introducing students to various theoretical perspectives on families. It includes case studies and journal articles that illustrate how various theories are used in research.

Michael Martinez '84, *Life and Death in Civil War Prisons: The Parallel Torments of Corporal John Wesley Minnich, C.S.A., and Sergeant Warren Lee Goss, U.S.A.* (Rutledge Hill, 2004). Author and editor of three other books, including *Confederate Symbols in the Contemporary South* (2001), Martinez is an attorney and part-time political science instructor at Kennesaw (Ga.) State University. Here he examines prison life during the Civil War through the stories of a Louisiana teen-ager and a sergeant from Massachusetts. The publisher says, "The book strips the war of its romance and pageantry. What is left is the hardship and horror of the war — and the extraordinary courage of American soldiers from both North and South."

Jonathan Rogers '91, *The Bark of the Bog Owl* (Broadman & Holman, 2004). This is the first installment in a series titled "The Wilderking Trilogy." The fantasy-adventure — an epic tale "told with an American accent," as the author says — follows 12-year-old shepherd boy Aidan Errorlson's emergence as the

national hero of the land of Corenwald. *Publishers Weekly* says the book, which echoes the works of Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, "takes biblical fiction to a new level in an imaginative fantasy rendition of the story of King David that both enchants and entertains." The author is a freelance writer in Nashville, Tenn., who holds a Ph.D. in 17th century English literature from Vanderbilt University. Visit the Web site, www.wilderking.com.

Lauren Johnson Rice '92, *The Messenger of Saigon* (Authorhouse, 2004). This historical novel, set in 1963, tells the story of CIA involvement in the removal from office and subsequent assassination of South Vietnamese president Ngo Dinh Diem. The author recently earned a master's degree in history from Wayne State University, with a concentration in U.S. foreign relations and, specifically, Vietnam War studies. The manuscript was her master's essay at Wayne State — the first novel accepted in the history of the department. Visit her Web site at www.laurenricebooks.com.

ABOUT AN ALUMNUS

Alexander Blackburn, *Meeting the Professor: Growing Up in the William Blackburn Family* (John F. Blair, 2004). In this dual portrait of father and son, the author tells of growing up as the son of William Blackburn, a legendary professor of English at Duke University — and a 1921 Furman graduate. During his years at Duke the senior Blackburn, the first Furman graduate to be named a Rhodes Scholar, served as mentor to such gifted writers as William Styron, Reynolds Price, Fred Chappell and Anne Tyler, among others. Duke holds an annual literary festival bearing his name. The younger Blackburn went on to become a novelist, essayist and educator; he is professor emeritus of English at the University of Colorado.