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Young Benefactors

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Furman philanthropy

Young Benefactors

When I served as director of university housing at Furman from 1984 to 1999, I knew them as students. They were bright, creative, adventuresome — and mischievous.

Like many of those who came before (and after), they tossed each other in the lake, complained about winter term, balked at Cultural Life Program requirements, enjoyed Beach Weekend and protested the university's housing policies. Some days, I thought they kept me young. Other days, they aged me prematurely. Nevertheless, they marked my life in a significant way.

What makes this group special is that they're still making their mark at Furman. They are Young Benefactors, alumni who graduated within the past 20 years and who give their time and resources to help Furman continue to thrive. The 95 Young Benefactors contribute at least \$1,000 annually to the university, either as an unrestricted gift, a donation to the Paladin Club or a combination of both.

Last spring, a 20-member Young Benefactors Executive Committee was formed. At their first meeting, they began planning activities to recognize their peers

Alumni group works to ensure Furman's continued growth



Mary Lou Merkt (second from left), Furman's vice president for business affairs, discusses finances with Amanda Capps '91, Ken Roper '91 (on Merkt's left) and Ed Stein '93.

who give to the university at leadership levels and to involve more alumni in the Young Benefactors program. They adopted a mission statement that says, in part, "We commit our time, expertise and resources to ensure that the university's fund-raising efforts include young alumni and lead to the best possible liberal arts education for students."

And other than their fading youth, they have another thing in common: They want to give something back to Furman.

Ken Roper '91, chair of the group's executive committee, came to Furman from a small town. He was a member of a working-class family and had to be creative and persistent in maximizing loans and grants to finance his education. He says, "The loans are all paid off, but I still owe Furman an immeasurable amount for what it meant to me."

I never dreamed that my reward for a 15-year stint as the university's housing director would be ongoing contact with former students who used to make my life so interesting! Now I get to meet their spouses and children and to hear about their successful careers and contributions in their communities.

They bring honor to the name "Furman," and I am proud to know them.

— Wayne King
Director, Annual Giving

Becoming a Young Benefactor is easier than ever because of the Hollingsworth Initiative, which assists donors in moving to a higher giving level by augmenting the first two years of a three-year pledge. For details, e-mail wayne.king@furman.edu or call him at (864) 294-3474.

Teaching and technologies center receives Duke Endowment support

As part of its year-end grant of \$2.3 million to Furman, The Duke Endowment designated \$195,000 toward establishment of a Center for Teaching and Engaged Learning on campus.

The CTEL will provide a central location for faculty and students to experience the newest learning technologies and teaching techniques. According to Tom Kazee, vice president for academic affairs and dean, "The center will be distinctive in its commitment to the integration of faculty development, curricular innovation and technological support."

The majority of the year-end grant, \$1.9 million, completed the endowment's \$9.5 million pledge toward the recently completed renovation and expansion of the James B. Duke Library.

The Northwest Crescent Child Development and Family Services Center, a social service agency that provides a variety of free services to residents of northwest Greenville County, received \$100,000. The center was established in 1998 through the efforts of Furman, The Children's Hospital of Greenville Hospital System, The School District of Greenville County and the United Way's "Success By 6" initiative.

In addition, \$100,000 went to support James B. Duke Scholarships, which are awarded to some of Furman's most academically gifted students.