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Furman welcomes high-profile guests

Furman University

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Furman reports

Award-winning program aids non-profit groups

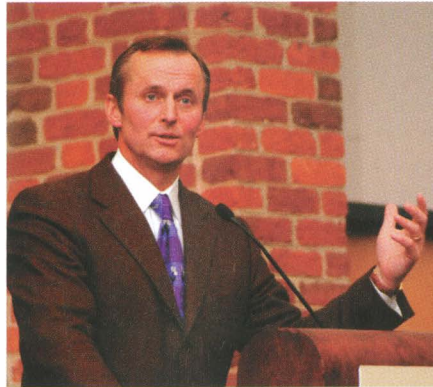
A Furman program in which students and employees re-engineer obsolete university computers and donate them to area organizations received the Community Service Award at the 2003 Innovision Technology Awards Program November 12 in Greenville. The Innovision awards celebrate innovation and technological excellence in business, education and the community.

The Furman program, called "Operation Reboot," has in recent years placed more than 100 recycled Furman computers with charities and non-profit agencies. Recipients have included the Greenville Rescue Mission, the YWCA, shelters for homeless and battered women, and the Newberry County Public Schools.

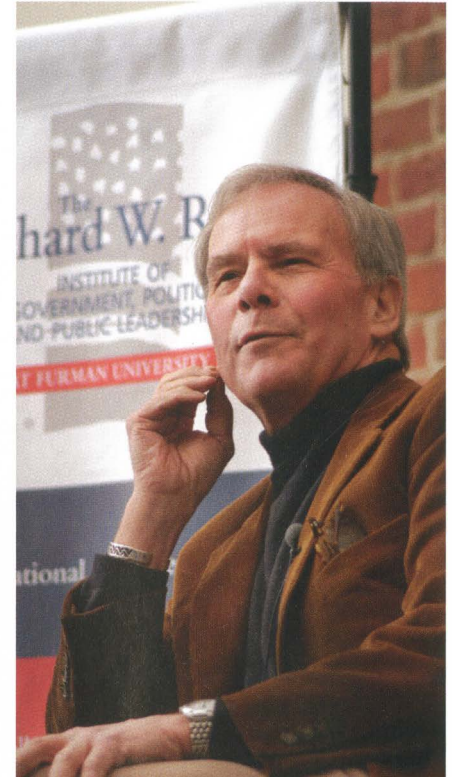
Through Operation Reboot, Furman's Department of Computing and Information Services adapts old machines to fit the basic technological needs of the recipients. After an agency is identified, it receives a visit from a Reboot volunteer who helps determine how best the machines can be used. C&IS staff members and student assistants then sort through the components of old computers (CD-drives, memory, hard drives) and piece together custom-designed machines.

Student volunteers, some of whom hold advanced technical certification, deliver and install the revamped machines, using Linux and other no-cost but high-tech operating systems to network the computers and protect them from viruses. The students also conduct training sessions for agency personnel and provide technical support when problems arise. When a recycled computer outlives its usefulness, Operation Reboot issues a replacement if one is available.

Compute Services, a hardware services contractor, has partnered with Operation Reboot to provide licensed copies of an obsolete but functional version of Microsoft Office that is loaded on the hard drives. Other university vendors have pitched in and donated such items as furniture, printers and free Internet access. To date, no non-profit agency that has asked for help has been turned away.



Grisham (top) visited for a day; Morgan (near right) was writer-in-residence winter term. Brokaw took a break from his debate duties to address a packed house.



Furman welcomes high-profile guests

The arrival of winter term brought a flurry of special guests to Furman.

Most notable was Tom Brokaw, long-time anchor of the *NBC Nightly News*, who visited the University Center January 29. He was in Greenville to moderate that night's Democratic Presidential Debate, which was co-sponsored by Furman and held at the Peace Center for the Performing Arts.

During his talk and subsequent question-and-answer session, Brokaw reminded students that the decisions made today will have a profound effect on their futures, and that they should become as informed about the political process as possible. His appearance was sponsored by the Richard W. Riley Institute of Government, Politics and Public Leadership.

Best-selling novelist John Grisham, whose latest book, *The Last Juror*, was just released, spoke on campus January 21 before traveling to downtown Greenville for the Upstate Diamond Classic, a fundraising event for the Furman baseball team. When Grisham's son was looking at colleges a few years ago, they visited Furman and struck up a friendship with baseball

coach Ron Smith. This year, when Smith called to invite Grisham to the Diamond Classic, he agreed to attend — and to stop by campus as well for a conversation with students, faculty and staff.

The author of 17 books, most of them legal thrillers, Grisham talked about his writing career, offered advice to prospective authors, and emphasized his love for college baseball. (See page 47 for a story on the "John Grisham of the Christian market.")

Award-winning writer Robert Morgan, an English teacher at Cornell University and a native of the North Carolina mountains near Hendersonville, spent the term on campus as writer-in-residence. He previously was writer-in-residence in winter 2002.

Morgan, a poet and novelist whose works include *Gap Creek* (1999), an Oprah Book Club selection and winner of the Southern Book Award, and *The Truest Pleasure* (1995), a *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of the Year, worked with students on independent study projects in creative writing. His most recent novel is *Brave Enemies*, published in October.