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## Following the rules

John Roberts  
*Furman University*

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## Following the rules

As associate director of athletics and compliance director at Furman since 1989, John Burns has been able to combine his love for sports with his talent for administrative oversight and appreciation for order.

Indeed, throughout his 33 years in higher education, Burns has held jobs that have played to his strengths: coach, admissions counselor, financial aid director. But the position he will retire from in May has been his favorite, because it immerses him in athletics and satisfies his need to organize.

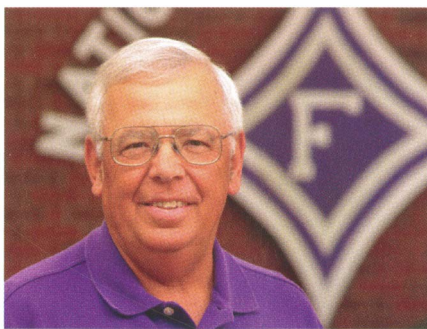
At Furman, Burns' job is to make sure that the athletic program, with its 30 coaches and 320 athletes, operates within NCAA rules. Since he assumed the job, Furman has been guilty of only a handful of secondary NCAA violations. Burns describes them as minor, self-reported offenses, such as when a coach buys a meal for a recruit off-campus when NCAA rules stipulate that prospective players can receive free meals on campus only.

"We've always been very fortunate at Furman because we have good coaches who want to run programs by the rules rather than trying to find ways around them," says Burns. "And we have great students who are motivated athletically and academically."

In a job that requires him to scrutinize coaches and their activities, Burns' sense of humor and easy-going personality are his greatest assets. Says athletic director Gary Clark, "John ensures that Furman follows the rules, but he does it in such a way to let everyone know that he is in their corner. He doesn't act like a barking traffic cop. He has a great rapport with our coaches."

A native of Kansas, Burns attended McPherson College, where he played football. He joined the Air Force in 1961, serving in Japan and in Vietnam as a navigator and radio operator on large supply planes. After leaving the service in 1966, he earned a master's degree in business management at the University of Colorado.

*Burns works to ensure that coaches, fans adhere to NCAA guidelines*



**John Burns will retire this spring after 20 years at Furman.**

While at Colorado, Burns decided to visit the athletic department and ask for a part-time job as a graduate assistant. A few months later he was offered a job breaking down game film for the football team. He also helped coach the defensive backs and kick return team.

"I really had a great time," Burns says. "I learned a lot about administration and enjoyed the interaction with students."

After earning his master's degree, Burns returned to McPherson as an admissions counselor and assistant basketball and football coach. A chance reunion with an old high school friend who was working at the College of Charleston led Burns to coastal South Carolina in 1972, when he was named director of financial aid at the college. He came to Furman in 1984 as associate director of financial aid and six months later was promoted to director, a post he held for four years before moving to athletics.

As director of compliance, Burns deals not only with coaches and athletes but with alumni, supporters and friends of the university — all of whom are also bound by NCAA rules and regulations. He has compiled a guide to help Paladin fans understand what they can and cannot do to support the university's athletic program.

As he says in the forward to the pamphlet, "Furman's reputation is one of upholding the highest degree of academic

and athletic integrity. This tradition can continue only if alumni and friends of the university are well-informed about NCAA rules and regulations that apply to 'representatives of athletic interests'."

— John Roberts

See the accompanying article for an excerpt from A Rules and Regulations Guide for Alumni and Friends of Furman Athletics. For a copy, contact Burns at (864) 294-2163 or by e-mail, [john.burns@furman.edu](mailto:john.burns@furman.edu).

### Rules to remember

John Burns, Furman's director of compliance, cautions that before you talk with a prospective student-athlete, you should contact the Furman athletic department to make sure you are not in violation of NCAA regulations.

#### Some rules to remember:

- Only a coach or a university staff member can be involved in the recruiting process.
- Alumni, friends and other representatives of athletic interests who are employed by Furman are prohibited from making contact (in person or by phone, fax or letter) with a prospect, or the prospect's family, for the purpose of encouraging his/her participation in athletics at Furman.
- If a non-permissible contact is made with a prospect, even if unintentional, the eligibility of the prospect could be affected. In addition, the NCAA could impose penalties on Furman.
- A prospect remains a prospect even after he/she signs a National Letter of Intent and thus remains subject to all recruiting rules.

## School names stadium in memory of Howard and John Bagwell

Fort Dorchester High School in North Charleston, S.C., has memorialized the contributions of Howard Bagwell '48 and his son, John Bagwell '89, to the school's athletic program.

During ceremonies October 31, the school announced that its football stadium will henceforth be known as Bagwell Stadium in honor of the two men. As a member of the Dorchester District II school board, the elder Bagwell was a leader in the de-

velopment of the school's athletic complex. His son was the school's first football coach and compiled a 65-56 record in 10 years.

Howard Bagwell died in July of 2002, and John Bagwell was killed in an automobile accident in December of 2002.

The elder Bagwell was athletic director at Charleston Southern University for 35 years and is the winningest track and field coach in the school's history. John Bagwell was an all-Southern Conference tailback

at Furman, where he ranks 17th on the all-time rushing list. He was a member of the 1988 NCAA I-AA national champions.

At the ceremonies, the high school also unveiled a marble monument that will serve as a permanent reminder of the two men and their legacy. Thirty-two red, white and blue balloons, representing the number John Bagwell wore during his high school and college days, were released during the event.