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Pipe dream

Furman University

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Pipe dream

Installation of new organ under way

The majestic final piece of the Charles E. Daniel Chapel began to take its long-awaited place in July when representatives of C.B. Fisk, Inc., arrived on campus to install Furman's new pipe organ.

The \$1 million organ, a gift from trustee emeritus Thomas S. Hartness and his late wife, Edna Gladden Hartness, in honor of Bobby Hartness and Becky Berry Hartness, will stand at the east end of the chapel's 350-seat sanctuary. The spot has been reserved for the organ since discussions about the design and size of the chapel began in the early 1990s.

Says Charles Tompkins, university organist and member of the music faculty since 1986, "Rarely do you get the opportunity to design both an organ and the room it is to be placed in at the same time, as was the case with Daniel Chapel. The building's high ceilings and resonant acoustics provide an almost cathedral-like sound, which is ideal for a pipe organ."

Especially one with 2,930 pipes, ranging in length from less than half an inch to 16 feet.

The initial phase of the installation — putting the organ together — started July 7 and was to take about five weeks.

But that was the easy part. Once the pieces were in place, the painstaking work of "voicing" the tone and volume of each of the organ's pipes began. The voicing is expected to take about seven months, which means that the sanctuary will be open only for Sunday services until spring.

For C.B. Fisk, which is based in Gloucester, Mass., the Furman organ is "Opus 121" in its canon of works. Founded in 1961 by the late Charles Brenton Fisk, the company has built organs for churches, universities and concert halls throughout North America, as well as in Europe and Japan. Harvard, Oberlin, Rice, Stanford and the University of Oklahoma are among the institutions that boast a Fisk organ.

The Furman organ will have 42 stops, or "voices," with tone colors that will include flutes, principals, reeds (brass or woodwind-like stops) and strings. It will have three keyboards and a pedalboard. The pipes will be constructed from wood and a variety of metals.

The organ will employ direct mechanical ("tracker") key action. Each key will be attached to a thin wooden "tracker," or rod, which in turn will be connected to a pallet that admits air to the pipes. When players depress a key, they will have direct control over the speech of the pipes.

The instrument will also feature a high degree of dynamic flexibility. Through the

use of "swell pedals," separate pedals located above the pedalboard, the organist will be able to increase or decrease the volume of sound gradually, a technique that is particularly important in accompanying vocal and instrumental soloists.

Understandably, the music department is ecstatic about the possibilities the new organ will offer for instruction and performance. As department chair William Thomas says, "This organ will be a crowning addition, both visually and musically, to the chapel's beautiful and acoustically dynamic space."

Tompkins is scheduled to introduce the organ to the public at a dedicatory recital in April.



COURTESY C.B. FISK, INC.

Edna Hartness: a life well lived

Edna Gladden Hartness, a civic and community leader in Greenville and a longtime benefactor of Furman, died June 14 at her home.

A native of Sanford, N.C., she studied for a nursing degree at Highsmith Hospital in Fayetteville, N.C. She later earned her pilot's license and was a Red Cross worker and Civil Air Patrol officer during World War II, when she taught recruits the basics of flying and military courtesies.

A woman of wide-ranging interests — wife and mother, life master bridge player, naturalist and world traveler — she was active in civic ventures in Greenville. A Girl Scout leader and supporter of conservation causes, she worked with such organizations as the Humane Society, the American Cancer Society, the Greenville County Museum of Art and the Little Theatre, as well as the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities.

At Furman she and her husband, trustee emeritus Thomas Signor Hartness, have helped fund a variety of campus projects. Her passion for music led her to provide scholarships for Furman music students and to sponsor the Gladden and Hartness Quartets. In honor of Tom's birthday in 1994, she presented a Steinway grand piano to Furman.

The couple's philanthropy extended to many other areas of the university, including

the academic and athletic programs. They provided lead gifts toward the construction of John E. Johns Hall and the Nan Trammell Herring Music Pavilion, and most recently they provided the new organ for the Charles

E. Daniel Chapel in honor of Bobby Hartness and Becky Berry Hartness. Hartness Welcome Center, which houses the admissions and financial aid offices, and Hartness Pavilion, a lovely banquet room beside the Charles E. Daniel Dining Hall, are named in their honor.

"Edna Hartness helped shape Furman's development since the move to the new campus," says President David Shi. "She inspired us all with

her adventurous spirit, radiant personality and boundless love."

In 1983 Furman presented her the Mary Mildred Sullivan Award because of her "awareness of the beauty and value of the intangible elements of life." In 1997 she received an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree in recognition of her "dedication and service to Furman and to the artistic and educational advancement" of the Greenville community. Her honorary degree citation stated that she left a distinctive mark on the world because of her "generosity, gifts of time and energy, and youthful zest for life."

She is survived by her husband, three children, seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

