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Biotechnology to be focus of consortium

Furman University

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Huff, Pitts to retire at close of academic year

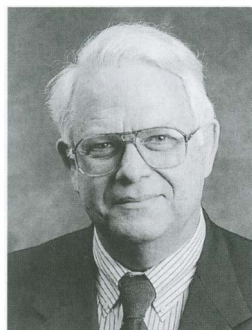
A.V. Huff, Jr., and James M. Pitts, administrators whose combined years of service to Furman total almost 70 years, have both announced plans to retire at the close of the 2002-03 academic year.

Huff, a pre-eminent historian of the South and South

Carolina, has been vice president for academic affairs and dean since 1995. A graduate of Wofford College, he joined the Furman history faculty in 1968. Holder of a Ph.D. from Duke University and a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Yale University, he is a minister in the United Methodist Church and serves as historian of the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church.

A specialist on the history of the American South and South Carolina, Huff is chair of the South Carolina Commission on Archives and History and has been president of the South Carolina Historical Association. He also serves on the editorial board of the *South Carolina Historical Magazine* and the advisory board of *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*.

He has written and edited several books, including *The History of South Carolina in the Building of a Nation*; *Greenville: City and County in the South Carolina Piedmont*; and



A.V. Huff, Jr.

Langdon Cheves of South Carolina. He is a recipient of the Sears-Roebuck Foundation's "Teaching Excellence and Campus Leadership Award."

University chaplain Jim Pitts is a 1960 Furman graduate who holds advanced degrees from two Southern Baptist seminaries, Southeastern and Southern. He came to Furman in 1967 as associate chaplain and assistant professor of religion and assumed the post of university chaplain in 1982.

He has ministered in both congregational and hospital settings, and his expertise includes crisis counseling and substance abuse intervention. In 1992 he received the Lewis W. Newman Award from the In-Service Guidance Conference, which recognized his lifelong leadership in career guidance for ministers and ministerial candidates.

He is currently chair of the board of Smyth & Helwys, a Macon, Ga., publisher of Christian-themed books and educational resources. He has also served as president of the Greenville Mental Health Association and chair of the Election Commission for the city of Travelers Rest, and has been a consultant to the substance abuse program of the Greenville Hospital System.



Jim Pitts

Biotechnology to be focus of consortium

Furman has joined in a consortium with two North Carolina colleges, Western Carolina and the University of North Carolina-Asheville, to boost the emerging biotechnology industry in the western Carolinas.

U.S. Rep. Charles Taylor of the 11th District of North Carolina has pledged to seek \$13 million in federal support for the Western Carolinas Biotechnology Consortium, which is the latest in a series of initiatives announced by Taylor to stimulate economic development by improving the region's educational infrastructure and stemming the phenomenon known as "brain drain."

The projected \$13 million in federal funding, to be sought in allocations over several years, will enable the three universities to jointly develop the high-tech resources, facilities and equipment needed to provide quality undergraduate and graduate training in several biotechnology fields, including genomics, proteomics and bioinformatics. Research conducted by faculty and students is expected to spin off start-up companies that will have a positive impact on the economy of western North Carolina and northwest South Carolina.

Furman president David E. Shi says that the public/private college partnership is unique, "not only because it straddles state boundaries, but it brings together institutions of higher learning that are very different in terms of their structure, their heritage and their mission."

Western Carolina chancellor John Bardo says that the partnership will enable the region to build its ability to participate in the new economy of the 21st century — and to avoid duplication of effort during tight economic times.

"What this consortium is about is trying not to reproduce the wheel so that each university doesn't have to go out and hire exactly the same people to do exactly the same work," Bardo says. "That allows us to spread our resources further and interact with a broader range of students, and it lets us bring together the great minds that we have on all of our campuses to get work done for the benefit of the people."

Three faculty members earn major honors

Two Furman faculty members received special awards from the South Carolina Arts Commission this fall, while a chemistry professor was awarded a major grant by the National Science Foundation.

The Board of Commissioners of the S.C. Arts Commission designated English professor Gilbert Allen and art instructor Diane Hopkins-Hughs to receive \$5,000 Artist Fellowships in recognition of "superior artistic merit." The awards were two of six presented in the state.

Allen, who has taught at Furman since 1977, is the author of three books of poetry: *In Everything* (1982), *Second Chances* (1991) and *Commandments at Eleven* (1994). His fourth collection, *Driving to Distraction*, will be published by the Orchises Press in January. His poems, stories and essays have appeared in such publications as *The American Scholar*; *The Cortland Review*; *Epoch*; *The Georgia Review*; *Image* and *The Southern Review*. He has won the Porter Fleming Award twice and the South Carolina Fiction Project four times for his short stories.

Hopkins-Hughs, a photographer who specializes in hand-colored gelatin silver prints,

has been an adjunct art instructor at Furman since 1989. Her work has appeared in more than 25 solo and 50 group shows throughout the country, and in 1996 she was named South Carolina Art Educator of the Year by the state Art Education Association.

Tim Hanks, Henry Keith and Ellen Hard Townes Professor of Chemistry, has been awarded a \$390,000 grant by the National Science Foundation to support his research in nanotechnology. He is the principal investigator for a three-year project titled "Tuning the Supramolecular Structure and Properties of Polydiacetylenes with Charge-Transfer Interactions." William Pennington of Clemson University is co-author of the grant.

Nanotechnology involves the creation of materials, devices and systems through the control of matter at the atomic level. A nanometer is one billionth of a meter, or about 1/80,000th of the diameter of a human hair.

At least six undergraduate chemistry students at Furman will be involved in the research over the next three years, as will two graduate students and four undergraduates from Clemson.