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## Leap of faith

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## Leap of faith

*Major career change for new alumni director*

Tom Triplitt seemed to have a comfortable, stable life. Having spent 25 years in the field of education, he was the middle school principal at Brookstone School in his hometown of Columbus, Ga.

He and his wife, Diane, had three daughters, he loved his job and, at the age of 48, he felt secure and settled. Changing careers and uprooting his family were the farthest things from his mind.

Until a round of golf with his good friend Gary Clark changed all of that.

During their outing in June, Clark, Furman's athletic director, urged Triplitt to apply for the vacant alumni director post at Furman. The pair had attended Furman at the same time during the mid-1970s and later worked together at Spartanburg (S.C.) Day School from 1987-91.

After their conversation, other Furman friends began calling Triplitt to reinforce Clark's suggestion. It took some convincing, but Triplitt eventually decided to update his resumé and send it in.

"I had a great job and was not desperate," he says, "so I felt no pressure during the interview."

Within a few weeks, though, the Triplitts had posted a "for sale" sign in the front yard of their Columbus home. Tom had gotten the job, and they were moving to Greenville.

"It happened so quickly that I feel this was meant to be," he says from his office in Cherrydale.

Was it a leap of faith? "Well, yes," he says slowly. "But I guess more so for Furman, since I haven't done this [kind of work] before."

Triplitt, a 1976 Furman graduate with a degree in biology, had reconnected with his alma mater in recent years through his oldest daughter, Pearce, who graduated last May.

"Pearce had a wonderful experience here," he says. "Furman did all the right things for her. Knowing this made the decision to come here more comfortable."

Triplitt enrolled at Furman in 1972 with notions of pursuing a pre-med track, but "taking chemistry changed things for me," he says with a laugh.



*Tom Triplitt says his favorite Furman memory is of biology field trips with professor Leland Rodgers.*

At Furman he met his future wife, Diane Wedgworth, and they married after she graduated in 1978. Tom's first job was teaching biology and physical science at Sumter High School. He went on to work at Christ School in Arden, N.C., and at Spartanburg Day before heading back to Columbus in 1991.

Now, as director of the Alumni Association, Triplitt says he "wants to find more ways to reach out and connect with the broad spectrum of Furman alumni. I am overwhelmed by the number of people whose lives are being touched by Furman alumni every day. I want to celebrate that and help alumni realize how much the value of their diploma increases as Furman grows in national prominence."

Shortly after arriving on campus, he leaped right into the fray, presiding over a meeting of the Alumni Association Board of Directors in mid-September and helping with the final plans for Homecoming.

Perhaps his biggest adjustment, though, has been to his spacious Cherrydale office, which offers a panoramic view of the campus.

"My first office at Brookstone wasn't much bigger than a cubicle. There was room for only one other person besides me. Here, I can actually have staff meetings in my office," he says.

"And I think President Shi deserves an office with this view, not me."

— John Roberts

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### Next reunion in 2004

**Julie Bolt** is director of business development for Banyan Senior Living in Greenville. ■ **Sandra Fanning Hinckley** of Lithia, Fla., a former shareholder with the law firm of Macfarlane Ferguson & McMullen, has become assistant general counsel with Kforce Inc., a professional staffing firm. ■ **BIRTHS:** **Grat** and **Christy Boyd '92 Correll**, a son, Andrew Scott, May 21, Bristol, Tenn. ■ **Erich** and **Teresa Rowland Daub**, a daughter, Morgan Linn, June 1, Stone Mountain, Ga. ■ **Walter** and **Andrea Heidcamp '90 Landow**, a daughter, Elena Grace, August 4, Kennesaw, Ga. ■ **Michael** and **Leslie Huckaby '90 Miller**, a daughter, Emily Grace, June 18, Charlotte, N.C. ■ **Mark '90** and **Trish Enloe Patterson**, a daughter, Elizabeth, April 30, Anderson, S.C. Trish and Mark both practice medicine in Anderson, she as a pulmonary and critical care physician and he as a vascular surgeon. ■ **Mike** and **Julie Roberts Saunders**, a daughter, Annie, March 30, Indianapolis, Ind.

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### Next reunion in 2005

**Matt D'Angelo** of Greer, S.C., is global project manager with Datastream Systems, Inc. ■ **BIRTHS:** **Elton** and **Amy Williamson Bailey**, a daughter, Davis Ann, August 7, Simpsonville, S.C. ■ **Justin** and **Sylvia Brent**, a daughter, Sienna Caroline, February 20, Clinton, S.C. ■ **Richard** and **Betsy Howe Cassidy**, a son, Rick, August 19, 2001, Hillsborough, N.C. ■ **Craig** and **Brandy Welsh Cleveland**, a daughter, Gracen Claire, October 25, 2001. Brandy is a special education teacher in Alpharetta, Ga. ■ **Kirk** and **Kate Stone** (M.A. '00) **Fisher**, a daughter, Ava Elisabeth, June 26, Greenville. ■ **John** and **Bridget Fleming '93 Skinner**, a daughter, Lindsay Kay, April 22, Atlanta, Ga. ■ **Paul** and **Elizabeth Sides '91 Wallace**, a daughter, Julia