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## A name for the mall

Furman University

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# BOOK MARKS

Each issue of *Furman* magazine includes brief reviews of books written by Furman faculty and alumni, as well as reviews of books recommended by faculty and staff as “good reads.”

## RECOMMENDED

Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (Houghton Mifflin, 2001).

You may never eat a Big Mac again after reading this fascinating exposé of the fast food industry. A combination of investigative journalism, absorbing history, penetrating economic analysis and political deal-making, the book began as an article in *Rolling Stone*. Schlosser follows the tradition of muckraking journalism made famous by Upton Sinclair’s 1906 classic *The Jungle*, and he clearly understands the line between profit and greed, efficiency and exploitation. He bolsters his argument with 55 pages of notes, six pages of bibliography and detailed personal investigation. By discussing subjects ranging from flavor additives (ever wonder why McDonald’s French fries taste so good?) to pre-packaging, slaughterhouse techniques and mad cow disease, and including profiles of fast food founders and illuminating accounts of the growth of the fast food landscape, he provides, in the words of one reviewer, “something tough to chew on.”

Furman selected *Fast Food Nation* as this summer’s required book for freshman reading. All entering students will discuss it during an Orientation Week luncheon in September. We’re considering a vegetarian menu!

— Judith Bainbridge,  
English

Sylvia Nasar, *A Beautiful Mind* (Simon & Schuster, 1998). When reading this book, I kept wondering: Why read about an individual who behaved like such a jerk? But the story of mathematician John Nash, who won the 1994 Nobel Prize in economics, is nevertheless worth reading. Nasar’s thorough research, which included interviewing hundreds of Nash’s acquaintances, results in a compelling picture of this genius afflicted with schizophrenia, and of certain American and European institutions. For example, we learn fascinating details of the workings of the RAND Corporation in the 1950s, and of the politics associated with the Nobel Prize nominations. For non-math people this book attempts to explain Nash’s Game Theory and its applications in economics, although despite Nasar’s best efforts the mathematical formulas

are mostly incomprehensible. Most moving is learning of the support that colleagues gave to Nash throughout the decades of his illness, which culminated in their lobbying for his Nobel nomination. The love of his wife, Alicia, although important, doesn’t take the central role it did in the Oscar-winning movie based on the book.

— Sofia Kearns, *Spanish*

## FROM AN ALUMNUS

Edward Hammett ’78, *Reframing Spiritual Formation: Discipleship in an Unchurched Culture* (Smyth & Helwys, 2002). This is the third book by Hammett, who is leadership and discipleship consultant for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. According to the publisher, it “provides practical suggestions for church leaders as to how to attract, assimilate, disciple and deploy persons who might not find their place in many traditional church programs and ministries.” Hammett’s main focus “is on facilitative questions and practical ideas for discipling the churched and the unchurched who are seeking grounding and meaning in this rapidly changing world.”

## FROM FACULTY

William E. Rogers, *Interpretation in Piers Plowman* (Catholic University of America, 2002). The publisher describes this book as the most thorough study available of the interpretive theory implied in William Langland’s classic 14th-century poem, which made Langland, a contemporary of Chaucer, one of the first English

poets with a national following. The poem, which is written in a Midland dialect of Middle English, has been called “the Mount Everest of textual criticism in English.” One reason: there are three versions. In addition, there are 54 surviving manuscripts, no two of them alike. The book would be of particular interest to medievalists, to scholars of any discipline interested in the reflections of a medieval intellectual, and to those with an interest in Langland and in 14th-century literature.

Rogers, Bennette E. Geer Professor of Literature, has taught at Furman since 1974.

A. Scott Henderson, editor/annotator, *Power and the Public Interest: The Memoirs of Joseph C. Swidler* (University of Tennessee, 2002). The publisher describes Swidler as “one of the last New Dealers, part of a generation of talented professionals who devoted their energies to serving public, not private, interests. In a career spanning six decades, he helped craft and administer the nation’s energy policy while witnessing most of the signal events of the modern age.” The memoir features insights on the leading people and events of the 20th century, ranging from Presidents Johnson and Kennedy to the Depression and the Cold War.

Henderson is assistant professor of education at Furman and the author of *Housing and the Democratic Ideal: The Life and Thought of Charles Abrams*.

## A name for the mall

One of the most distinctive and beautiful areas of the Furman campus, the tree-lined mall that runs along the north-south axis from the fountains at the front entrance to the Lay Physical Activities Center, has been officially named **Furman Mall** in honor of two members of the university’s founding family, Alester G. Furman III and his wife, Mary Simms Oliphant Furman ’39. At dedication ceremonies April 30, the Furmans were honored for their service, leadership and generosity, traits that are in keeping with the family’s ongoing commitment and devotion to the university that bears its name. Alester Furman III is a leading Greenville businessman, longtime trustee and former chair of the board. Mary Simms Furman and her mother, noted historian Mary Simms Oliphant, co-authored two textbooks on South Carolina history.

