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## Safety concerns force cancellation of study abroad programs

Furman University

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## C. Leland Rodgers, 1918-2001

He met me as I stepped into the Greenville-Spartanburg Jetport terminal. I was an anxious graduate student who had never been on South Carolina soil and who didn't have a job for the next year. He was C. Leland Rodgers, native of Greenville County, perhaps the most knowledgeable field botanist in several states, and chair of the department with which I was to interview. Within minutes, this soft-spoken gentleman had made me feel welcome and considerably more amenable to the idea of beginning an academic career in the Deep South.

Leland, who died October 26, devoted 32 years of his life to teaching at Furman. Before that he had already taught at every level, from high school through college. A 1939 Furman graduate, he earned a master's degree at Duke University and began his postsecondary teaching career at North Greenville College. In 1942 he married Jean Holliday (Furman '59), who remained his companion for the next 59 years. She passed away just over a month after his death.

Leland's plan to earn a doctorate was held up by World War II, during which he served as a naval officer in the South Pacific. He received his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina in 1950, and after teaching briefly at Carson-Newman College he came back to alma mater, where he taught until his retirement in 1988.

His lifelong passion was the study of the plants of the Piedmont and mountains of the Carolinas. He was intrigued by their great diversity in this area, where the cooler climes of the Appalachian chain meet the year-round warmth of the lower regions and thus create a wide range of habitats.

When development began to devour the woods and fields, he resolved to make people aware of the botanical loss that was

occurring, becoming active in such groups as The Nature Conservancy. He was often asked to conduct botanical surveys and worked closely with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. He discovered the locations of many rare plant species, including Furman's endangered Bunched Arrowhead.

Leland was also well known beyond the campus through his publications. He authored or co-authored over 30 scholarly articles and several books, two of which are still in print. He was active in the South and North Carolina Academies of Science and was a member for over 30 years of Sigma Xi, the Southern Appalachian Botanical Club (which he served as president), and the Association of Southeastern Biologists.

In the late 1960s he created the Ives Herbarium within Furman's biology department, contributing many specimens from his field work. With over 20,000 specimens, this facility is an invaluable resource for Furman students and faculty and for botanists throughout the country.

An intensely private person, Leland blossomed when standing before students in the classroom or leading them through fields and swamps. Those who took a class with him will remember the sudden halting of the van as Leland, having spied a rare plant, leaped out for a closer investigation. His dedication to science and teaching inspired many students to follow him into similar careers. Furman honors him each year by presenting the C. Leland Rodgers Biology Award to the student graduating with the highest grade average in biology.

During Leland's tenure as department chair, seven faculty members were hired, including three who later became chairs themselves. His ability to blend teaching and research involving students was a



Leland Rodgers taught at Furman from 1956-88.

model for the department, long before Furman came to be known as the engaged learning campus. Although he acted as a mentor for younger teachers, he always insisted that the classroom was a professor's domain, within which he or she should have the last word as to what was taught and how it was presented. He was a man of integrity and humility, who will be missed by friends and family.

He is survived by two sons, Charles and David; a daughter, Rachele Knight; a sister, Virginia Riddle; and a brother, Alton.

— John Snyder  
Professor of Biology

## Safety concerns force cancellation of study abroad programs

Because of the ramifications of the September 11 terrorist attacks, Furman decided to cancel two study abroad trips planned for winter term. Sixty-nine students were scheduled to take part in programs in the Eastern Mediterranean, which would have included a visit to the Middle East, and in South Africa.

The trips were cancelled because of the war in Afghanistan and the unsteady political situations in both areas. As John Shelley, religion department chair, told *The Paladin*, "We cannot predict what will happen with this war or what would happen

if Furman traveled to the Middle East, but we can adhere to the warnings of imminent danger."

On two previous occasions, Furman has cancelled study abroad trips to the Middle East because of safety concerns.

Study abroad programs to Costa Rica/ Galapagos Islands and to Chile proceeded as planned this winter, with a total of 37 students participating.

During fall term, Furman-sponsored trips to China, England, France and Spain were held as scheduled, with 99 students participating.

All but the England program began before September 11 — the day participants in the England program were scheduled to leave. Their departure was delayed for more than a week. In addition, 29 Furman students took part in affiliated programs in Australia, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Scotland and South Africa.

The university hopes its full slate of study abroad programs will resume in the fall. As A.V. Huff, vice president for academic affairs and dean, told *The Paladin*, "Taking caution now will help ensure the future of study abroad programs."