Sanford heads distinguished honorees at Commencement

Jim Stewart '76
Furman University

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Mark Sanford '83 and Sarah Weaver Herring '66 were among four individuals who received honorary doctorates at the spring Commencement June 2, when Furman awarded 654 undergraduate and 57 master's degrees.

Sanford, a former Congressman from the First District of South Carolina, was presented a Doctor of Laws degree in recognition of his principled approach to politics and commitment to public service. He also delivered the Commencement address, in which he succinctly exhorted the graduates to be leaders in their chosen fields and to help overcome what he described as the nation's "crisis of leadership."

"Leadership comes from the heart," he said while encouraging the Class of 2001 to follow their dreams and to engage in and value service to others. Sanford, who left Congress at the completion of his third term in 2000, is currently a candidate for the Republican nomination for governor of South Carolina. The election will be held in 2002.

Herr ing, a longtime Furman benefactor and past recipient of the Alumni Service Award, was awarded a Doctor of Humanities degree for her "exemplary leadership, exquisite judgment and transcendent generosity." She and her husband, Gordon '65, are among Furman's staunchest benefactors. Founding members of the Richard Furman Society and the Furman Partners scholarship program, they established the Herring Chair in Asian Studies to honor their parents and provided the naming gift for the Nan Trammell Herring Music Pavilion. They also played a critical role in the growth in alumni giving and made a major donation toward construction of Timmons Arena.

Donald T. Regan, Secretary of the Treasury during the Reagan administration and a former head of Merrill Lynch, received a Doctor of Laws degree. A champion of free enterprise, deregulation and competition in American industry, he was named to the Cabinet post in 1981 and later served as the president's chief of staff. He has written extensively for financial and business publications, and his best-selling memoir, For the Record: From Wall Street to Washington, has been described as "an honest book — a rarity in official Washington." He was honored for his "contributions to the national welfare as a business leader, influential Cabinet member and trusted presidential advisor."

Mary Patterson McPherson, vice president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and former president of Bryn Mawr College, received a Doctor of Humanities degree for her contributions to higher education. The Mellon Foundation is a major supporter of innovative university programs and has funded a variety of projects at Furman. Most recently, a grant from the foundation helped faculty members expand their use of information technology in the classroom.

Among the graduates, Bridgette Alana Martin of Charlotte, N.C., earned the Scholarship Cup, given each year to the graduating senior with the highest academic average. A summa cum laude graduate in psychology, she compiled a perfect grade-point average of 4.0. She plans to attend Stanford University and study for a doctorate in cognitive psychology.

The faculty chose Karen Vern ice Guth of Greenville and Jason Lyell Vassy of Spartanburg, S.C., to receive the General Excellence Awards, given to the outstanding senior man and woman. Guth, a magna cum laude graduate in religion, will study and travel in Scotland next year on a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship. Vassy, a summa cum laude graduate in chemistry, will teach English abroad for a year before enrolling in medical school at Washington University in St. Louis, Mo.

The Alester G. Furman, Jr., and Janie Earle Furman Award for Meritorious Teaching went to history professor Timothy Gene Fehler and art professor Carolyn Joslin Watson. Moses Nam Fong Lee, professor of chemistry, and political science professor Chistain Danielle Vinson '89 received the Alester G. Furman, Jr., and Janie Earle Furman Award for Meritorious Advising.

— Jim Stewart