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Five professors complete their Furman careers: Hammett helped students combat math anxiety

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Five professors complete their Furman careers



Arnold was devoted to students' welfare

Not content to offer accounting instruction just in the classroom, Bob Arnold has provided it on our highways, too. For many years, he has proudly displayed the letters DR and CR (the abbreviations for debit and credit) as his South Carolina license plate.

Throughout his 12-year tenure at Furman, Bob was a dedicated teacher and advisor. He taught an array of accounting courses in both the day and evening programs and was always willing to help the department in any way he could, often teaching a course overload or adding students to his sections to meet demand.

Bob's classes offered students a blend of theory with practical applications. As a result, he often kindled an interest in accounting among students who may not have been considering accounting as a potential career. In class, he demanded that students be active learners and placed a high value on helping them develop their oral communication skills.

During class, Bob was able to draw out even the most reserved Furman student. He was effective in teaching students from a range of abilities — those to whom the material came easily and those who may have struggled. All realized their highest potential in Bob's courses. He never gave up on a student, and he never let students give up on themselves.

Bob truly cared about the welfare of students, and students knew it. He counseled students not only about their academic progress and professional goals, but also about their personal lives. He helped many secure employment, both part time and full time. He was not content until each graduating accounting major had either been accepted to graduate school or had a job offer securely in hand. At departmental receptions at Homecoming, alumni always seek out Professor Arnold.

Bob received his Bachelor of Science degree from Miami University of Ohio and later, a Master of Arts degree from Gannon University in Erie, Pa. In addition, he is a Certified Public Accountant. Prior to coming to Furman, he had accumulated extensive experience in public accounting, in industry and in university teaching. He also served in the U.S. Army.

He is an avid golfer. He and Gloria built a home that looks out on Greenville's Pebble Creek Golf Course — clearly a cost-efficient way of maintaining a good supply of golf balls. In the past several years, they have gone on a number of interesting cruises. In retirement, they expect to continue their travels; this summer they toured the Mediterranean. Bob is also a devout fan of Cleveland sports teams, which has taught him the valuable lesson of accepting defeat graciously and often.

Bob's colleagues at Furman will miss seeing him on a daily basis. Fortunately, he'll be just a chip shot away.

— Lawrence Kessler
Professor of Accounting



Hammett helped students combat math anxiety

The Department of Mathematics has mixed feelings about Mike Hammett's decision to retire. While we are happy for him, we are sorry that we will no longer have the privilege of working with Mike. No one could ask for a better colleague or friend.

Not only has Mike taught at Furman for 36 years, but he is also a Furman graduate, Class of 1959. In fact, his family's blood runs purple. His father, his wife (Martha Stagg '59) and his two daughters, Marcy '82 and Meryl '86, are also Furman graduates.

Mike met Martha during their freshman year at Furman, and they married after graduation. He went on to earn a master's degree at Auburn and, after a brief dalliance with the U.S. Army, joined Furman's mathematics department in 1962. He taught for three years before returning to Auburn in 1965 to complete his Ph.D. in differential equations. In 1967, Furman hired Dr. Hammett again.

I was fortunate to have Mike as a teacher in 1975 for point set topology, a course that proved to be a big help in graduate school. Between 1978 and 1985, he also helped out in the computer science department, teaching beginning courses in FORTRAN and Pascal.

One of this year's top mathematics graduates, Angela Highbaugh, says she will always remember a particular class that Mike taught. He was in the middle of a complex proof, so lengthy that he had almost completely filled the board. As he looked for the extra space he needed, he found that he was just able to squeeze in the final elements of the proof. In tiny letters, he wrote, "Think ahead." That's great advice for all of us.

Mike says his favorite part of teaching has been working with students who had previously not had a good experience with mathematics. Students appreciated his ability to explain things clearly and make the difficult seem simple. Over the years, Mike says he has noticed that students who have a positive experience with mathematics often become more confident in general.

An avid jogger, Mike's other interests include boating, tennis and racquetball. He also enjoys fixing things, especially cars, with his favorite being a Corvair. His first new car was a Corvair, and he belongs to a national Corvair club.

Martha, a media specialist at Brook Glenn Elementary, is joining Mike in retirement this year. They plan to build a house on some property they own at Lake Keowee and hope to travel and spend time with their family, which includes four grandchildren.

But we won't be surprised to see Mike on campus every so often, perhaps teaching a course in the Continuing Education program. After all, not every teacher has his ability to make students feel more at ease with mathematics — and with themselves.

— Nancy Shell '76
Professor of Mathematics