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Keith, Kitchings get shot at NFL

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Clark appointed director of athletics

Gary Clark, who has been in charge of athletic fund raising at Furman since 1998, has been promoted to the position of athletic director, effective September 1. He replaces John Block, who in July announced plans to step down after four years as vice president for intercollegiate athletics to return to teaching.

A 1974 Furman graduate with a degree in history, Clark spent 23 years at Spartanburg (S.C.) Day School as a teacher, coach and headmaster before coming to Furman in April of 1998 as director of the Paladin Club. He added the title of associate athletic director for external affairs the following year. The Paladin Club enjoyed a tremendous resurgence under his guidance, raising a record \$918,000 for athletic scholarships last year.

Clark, who played basketball at Furman under Joe Williams, holds M.Ed. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of South Carolina. At Spartanburg Day he oversaw several successful enrollment and fund-raising campaigns.

He takes over the athletic department after one of Furman's most successful sports seasons. In 1999-2000, six Paladin teams qualified for

NCAA tournament play and seven coaches received Southern Conference Coach of the Year honors. Furman won its eighth straight Germann Cup as the best women's sports program in the league, and the men placed second in the Commissioner's Cup race for best all-around sports program.

Clark said, "We have just enjoyed what may have been the best collective year ever in Furman athletics, so it will be a challenge to build on this success. But with the coaches and support staff we have here in athletics, I believe there is no limit to what we can accomplish."

A native of Chicago Heights, Ill., Clark is married to Merrie McCullough '75. They have two sons.

Block, a 1963 Furman graduate, has been a member of the history department since 1968 and has also served as the university's NCAA faculty representative. Aside from the success in fund-raising during his four years at the helm of the athletic department, he oversaw the construction of Timmons Arena, the Irwin Belk Complex for Track and Field, and Pepsi Stadium, a new facility for women's softball.



Gary Clark

"When John so graciously agreed to head the athletic department, we knew it would be for a limited time," said Furman president David Shi. "In 1996 our athletic program needed someone who could give it stability and focus, and John's leadership skills and extensive knowledge of NCAA and Southern Conference issues were just what the situation demanded.

"In seeking to replace him, we wanted someone with similar qualities, keen intelligence, substantial athletic experience, visionary leadership, and a sincere appreciation for Furman's high academic standards and institutional priorities. Gary Clark has all of those qualities and more."

Another big year for Belk Pro-Am

The weather couldn't have been better. The crowd was one of the largest ever. And the golf wasn't bad, either.

The 19th Belk Furman Pro-Am, held May 1, produced another banner year by raising \$115,000 to support the university's golf programs. Since its beginning in 1982, the event has raised more than \$1.2 million.

As evidence of the pro-am's continuing popularity, the 128 playing spots in the field were filled by January 17. Individuals and companies from 11 states were represented.

A strong group from the Ladies Professional Golf Association, including three Hall of Famers (tournament founders Betsy King '77 and Beth Daniel '78, plus Joanne Carner) were among the pros in attendance. In all, 14 Furman alumnae returned for the festivities, with the team led by Sherri Turner '79 (and featuring golf coaches Mic Potter and Todd Satterfield) earning top honors in the "gross" division. Pro Cindy McCurdy's team, which included football coach Bobby Johnson and assistant coach Clay Hendrix, took top honors in the "net" division.

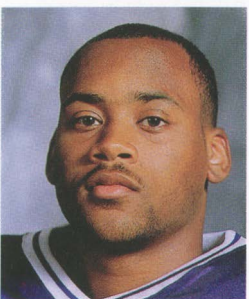
Among other highlights of this year's activities were a tournament party at Greenville's Hyatt Regency and a children's golf clinic. Sponsored by ALLTEL, the clinic attracted 300 youngsters ages 6 to 14.

More than 100 volunteers contributed to the success of the event, which is sponsored by the Paladin Club.

Keith, Kitchings get shot at NFL



John Keith



Des Kitchings

There were two things Furman football fans could count on just about any Saturday during the last few seasons. John Keith was going to rush up from his safety position and make a bone-jarring tackle on some poor running back, and speedy wide receiver Des Kitchings was going to be *much* faster than any defensive player who tried to keep up with him.

So if you watched these two players throughout their careers and couldn't help but think they were a few cuts above your average Division I-AA football player, it wasn't your imagination. The National Football League verified as much this spring.

When the NFL held its 2000 draft April 15-16, both Keith and Kitchings, who received their Furman degrees in May, were among the 254 players selected. Keith went in the fourth round to the San Francisco 49ers, and the Kansas City Chiefs picked Kitchings in the seventh round.

Furman, in fact, held its own in the draft with some of the nation's top football powers. Clemson, for instance, had no players drafted. Furman's total was one better than that of Texas, Notre Dame and UCLA, the same as Louisiana State and Purdue, and just one less than Georgia, Georgia Tech and Nebraska.

"It helps a great deal for Furman to have players in the NFL," says Bobby Johnson, coach of the Paladins. "It gets the university's name out there across the country and it proves that you don't have to go to a big school to get noticed by the NFL scouts. Most of our players won't play in the NFL and most don't aspire to that, but having two players picked in the draft attests to the quality of football we play at Furman."

If Keith and Kitchings manage to make their respective teams, Furman will likely have a total of four players in the NFL. Luther Broughton '97 is a tight end for the Philadelphia Eagles, and Orlando Ruff '99 is a linebacker and special teams player with the San Diego Chargers.

In 1999, Broughton was the Eagles' leading tight end, with 26 catches for 295 yards and four touchdowns. Ruff played in 14 games for the Chargers as a rookie last season — he ranked third on the special teams with 12 tackles — and entered training camp as the backup middle linebacker behind 11-year veteran Eric Hill. Both players are expected to be integral parts of their teams in 2000.

— Vince Moore