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Making music

Furman University

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CLASS NOTES SUMMER 00, cont.

83

Next reunion in 2003

Shawn M. Flanagan, a certified specialist in tax law, estate planning and probate law, has become a principal in the firm of Buist, Moore, Smythe & McGee in Charleston, S.C. ■ **Lee Belcher McFadden** of Spartanburg, S.C., is a paralegal at Leatherwood Walker Todd & Mann, P.C., in Greenville. ■ **BIRTHS:** Eric and **Beth Coffman Blamick**, a daughter, Kari Elizabeth, November 22, Eustis, Fla. ■ **John W. "Jay" and Ann Hollins '86 Holmes**, a son, Christopher Davis, June 7, 1999, Georgetown, S.C. Jay Holmes is minister of music at First Baptist Church of Georgetown and Ann Holmes teaches fifth grade at

Plantersville Elementary School.

■ **Richard and Suzanne Mingus Phillips**, a daughter, Harriett GraceAnn, July 19, 1999, Birmingham, Ala. ■ **Richard F. and Deborah Wright Roszel**, a son, Andrew Wright Roszel, September 7, 1999, Flowery Branch, Ga.

84

Next reunion in 2004

BIRTHS: **Brian F. and Brenda Ellison**, a son, Elijah Keith, March 4, Chapel Hill, N.C. Brian Ellison is a new-business coordinator for Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina. ■ **Alan and Sara "Deedy" Welborn Francis**, a daughter, Lydia Grace, February 15, Anderson, S.C. In addition to teaching voice at Anderson College, Deedy Francis conducts the Anderson

Girls Choir, is music director at Central Presbyterian Church and maintains a private voice studio.

85

This year is reunion!

Simone Nichols Pace, co-owner with her father of Si-Bil Production Video Company, has resumed work as a dance instructor in Simpsonville, S.C. ■ **BIRTHS:** W. James, Jr., and **Deborah Melton Burris**, a son, Jeremy Scott, January 4, Matthews, N.C. ■ **Martin S. and Midge O'Neal Lee**, a son, Martin O'Neal, June 4, 1999, Greenville. ■ **Scott and Lynn Leith**, a son, Andrew Mitchell, February 29. Scott Leith is a battalion executive officer with the U.S. Army stationed in Germany.

86

Next reunion in 2001

Chas Fox, founder and chief executive officer of Southern Sun Company, was a guest of

the Canadian government at GLOBE 2000, an international conference on developing the business of the environment. Fox demonstrated elements of his biotechnology company's advanced system for recycling plastics and nutrients and its innovative methods that allow for the healthy growth of plants without use of herbicides or pesticides. ■ **Gregory D. Gardner** of Dana Point, Calif., has become director of business development for Dovebid, Inc., a venture-funded pre-IPO company. ■ **Scott Lutz** works as the general counsel of Ericsson in San Diego, Calif. ■ **Harrell Jud Woolard** is a border patrol agent for the U.S. Department of Justice. He was discharged from the U.S. Army in January and now lives in El Paso, Texas. ■ **BIRTHS:** John K. and **Lori Lynn Ady Adams**, a son, Christian John, March 20, Orlando, Fla. ■ **Marion D. Lawson '87 and Tracy Jones Lawson**, a son, Samuel Donnan,



Matthews



Nissen

Making music

Kyle Matthews '86 has established a strong reputation as a Christian concert artist, songwriter and musical storyteller. His compositions have been recorded by some of the leading lights in the industry, including Cece Winans, Gary Chapman, Larnelle Harris and Point of Grace, and his "If You Want Me To" was recently a No. 1 hit for rising star Ginny Owens on the Christian contemporary charts.

But now Matthews has emerged from behind the scenes to take center stage with his first CD on a major record label. "See for Yourself" was released in August by Benson Records.

Based in Nashville, Tenn., Matthews began writing and performing music during his undergraduate years at Furman. After doing graduate study in music theory at Baylor University, he has spent the last decade writing, lecturing and performing at churches, universities, conferences and other special events both in this country and overseas. In July he returned to Furman to perform at the annual Pastors School.

Benson Records says Matthews' work is "on the cutting edge of piano-driven pop" and describes his music as "truthful, in an honest, artful way . . . [it] seems to help recall the memory of a time when music was made by real people playing real instruments."

Matthews is married to Susan Fowler '84 and they have two young children, Emily and Christopher. For more on his work, visit his Web site at www.kylematthews.com

Two Nashville alums release CDs

While Matthews has been associated with contemporary Christian music for a while, Jenny Nissen '98 is a relative newcomer to the business. Like Matthews, she's also based in Nashville and has come out with her own CD, "Close Your Eyes," an independently produced release featuring her own songs. It is available at www.indieforce.com.

"People have said that my music is positive, maybe a little too happy," she says. "I strive to promote a spirit of excitement toward obeying God."

Nissen, whose dynamic voice has attracted interest from various record companies, works full time as an assistant to the youth minister and minister of activities at Forest Hills Baptist Church in Nashville. The job offers enough flexibility for her to step out and perform at area colleges and churches. In one of her most prestigious gigs to date, she was the opening act for Owens, winner of this year's Dove Award (the Gospel Music Association's equivalent of a Grammy) for top new artist, at the South Carolina Baptist College Conference.

Nissen has also found other outlets through which to hone her performing skills. She played Guinevere in a Nashville production of the musical "Camelot" and was invited to perform at the city's "An Evening of the Arts" celebration, hosted by country music star Marty Stuart. In addition, she has appeared with the Tennessee Repertory Theatre, a professional group.