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Center of Habitat Earth focuses on environment

Furman University

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HICKEN NAMED STATE'S TOP BAND DIRECTOR

Les Hicken, director of bands at Furman, has been named the Band Director of the Year by the South Carolina chapter of Phi Beta Mu, an international fraternity of band directors.

It is a distinct honor for Hicken. Phi Beta Mu's South Carolina chapter consists largely of high school band directors, and there are only eight college band directors in South Carolina.

Hicken, who has been at Furman since 1993, conducts the Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Marching Band and Basketball Band, and teaches instrumental conducting and music education. Before coming to Furman, he was director of bands at Youngstown State University.

A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, Hicken earned his doctorate at Indiana University. He serves as artistic director of the Carolina Youth Symphony and director of Furman's Summer Lakeside Concert series. He will travel to Brazil next fall, where he will teach instrumental music in the local schools.

MORRISON VIOLIN SCHOLARSHIP CREATED

A \$200,000 music scholarship fund has been created at Furman in memory of a graduate who studied violin at the university more than 60 years ago.

The scholarship fund was established by the family of the late Mildred Perkins Morrison, who graduated from Greenville Womans College (which later merged with Furman) in 1939 with a degree in music. The university expects to award the first Mildred Perkins Morrison Violin Scholarship this fall.

The daughter of J.T. Perkins of Chester, S.C., Mildred Perkins Morrison performed with the Greenville Symphony Orchestra. She also attended graduate school at the Juilliard School of Music. She married Norman Morrison during World War II, and the couple later lived in Hartford, Conn., and Owatonna, Minn. She died in 1957.

Benefactors Circle to honor major donors

The board of trustees has voted to create a special area on campus that will honor the university's major donors.

Benefactors Circle, which will serve as a "dignified and lasting tribute to benefactors" of Furman, will be located adjacent to Cherrydale (the Alumni House) and the proposed Younts Conference Center, on the hill overlooking the university's tennis and track complexes.

At the center of Benefactors Circle will be a statue of Richard Furman, the

founder of the university. The statue will include quotes from Furman and his son, James Clement Furman, the university's first president. Surrounding the statue will be a brick plaza with concentric bands of granite engraved with the names of donors who have participated at the highest levels of giving in Furman's history.

Sculptor Maria Kirby-Smith of Camden, S.C., has been commissioned to create the statue. The project is expected to be completed within the next two years.

Center for Habitat Earth focuses on environment

With concern for environmental issues growing among college students, the Furman faculty has approved the establishment of a concentration in Environmental Studies.

The capstone course of the concentration, "Environment and Society," will be offered during the spring term of 2001 and will be team-taught by professors from the biology and political science departments. In addition to the capstone course, students enrolled in the concentration must complete a class in Environmental Science and three additional courses, one each from the divisions of humanities, social sciences and natural sciences.

The university also offers concentrations in Latin American Studies, Women's Studies and Classical Studies.

The adoption of the concentration represents one of four initiatives for the university's new Center for Habitat Earth. Another initiative focuses on environmental research.

"The earth and environmental sciences department, biology department and chemistry department have created the most successful interdisciplinary research program in Furman's history," says biology professor Wade Worthen. "Grants from the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency, state agencies and local citizen's groups are supporting a study of the effects of different land-use patterns on water chemistry and water quality in Upstate rivers. This project is providing our students with an incredible interdisciplinary research experience."

The Center for Habitat Earth is also working to develop an "Environmental House," an environmentally friendly living space in which students will measure their energy use. As a pilot project, a university cottage on the north side of the Furman lake will be retrofitted with resource-saving components such as insulation, energy-efficient lighting and low-flow water fixtures. Students living in the facility will commit to recycling and energy conservation.

In the future, Worthen envisions a new, larger structure populated by students enrolled in the Environmental Studies concentration. The students will apply lessons from class to their daily lives and will contribute a portion of the cost savings to the environmental charity of their choice.

The Center for Habitat Earth is also developing plans to create a "theme" term at Furman that would focus on environmental issues. Noted speakers, authors and environmentalists would take part in symposia, lecture series and round-table discussions throughout the term.