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Furman University

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Furman campaign



Ground broken for Herman N. Hipp Hall

April 20 was a beautiful spring day and proved the perfect occasion for Furman to break ground for its newest academic building — Herman N. Hipp Hall.

The three-story, 35,000-square-foot building, scheduled to be completed by spring 2002, will house the departments of education and economics and business administration, the Rushing Center for Advanced Technology, and the department of marketing and public relations. It is named for the late Herman Neel Hipp, a Furman alumnus, Greenville civic leader and longtime president of Liberty Life Insurance Company.

Herman Hipp graduated from Furman in 1935 and joined Liberty Insurance, a company his father founded in 1919. After his father's death in 1943, Herman and his brother, Francis, joined their uncle, Grady Hipp, in

leading the company to a place of prominence in the South Carolina corporate community.

Herman N. Hipp worked with the company for nearly 50 years before his death in 1984. He was named president in 1969 and also served as executive vice president and director of the Liberty Corporation and of Cosmos Broadcasting Corporation.

A civic leader, he served terms as director of the Greenville Chamber of Commerce and as chairman of the board of the Greenville Hospital System. His service to Furman included 15 years on the Advisory Council and the establishment of a major scholarship program that assists students majoring in economics and business or computer science.

In 1988, the Hipp family established the Herman N. Hipp Chair in Computer Science, a post held by T. Ray Nanney.

"Our father spent his entire life as a

South Carolinian," said Hipp's son, Neel, a Furman trustee and 1973 alumnus. "All of his life, he had a passionate love affair with our state and the people who live here. He also realized the key to the future of our state was to encourage young South Carolinians to attend college at home. We believe this facility will help Furman do exactly that."

A \$2 million gift from the Hipp family in November of 1998 served as the impetus for the new building, which will cost \$5.2 million. An endowment of \$1.5 million will fund the building's maintenance.

The construction of Hipp Hall will pave the way for the renovation of James C. Furman Hall by freeing up the space vacated by the economics and business and education departments, two of the university's largest academic departments.

Special commitments honor Blackwells

When he graduated from Furman in 1932, Gordon Williams Blackwell vowed that he would devote his life "to working with people in their spiritual, social and educational development. This is the only aspiration in life that will satisfy me."

He certainly made good on his promise, enjoying a stellar career as a professor, scholar, administrator and, finally, as a college president, first at the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, then at Florida State and, from 1965 until his retirement in 1976, at Furman.

Blackwell and his wife, Lib, provided outstanding leadership during their 11 years as Furman's president and first lady. During the Blackwell administration, the university's enrollment increased 58 percent, faculty compensation and the endowment more than doubled, and student financial aid nearly quadrupled. The curriculum and academic calendar were revised, and Furman was awarded a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious academic honorary society. In addition, five new buildings were constructed: the Herman W. Lay Physical Activities Center, an addition to the John L. Plyler Hall of Science, a men's residence hall, a women's residence hall, and the Homozel Mickel Daniel Music Building. Moreover, the Blackwells' wit, warmth and charm earned countless friends for the university.

To recognize Gordon and Elizabeth Blackwell for their extraordinary contributions, their son, Gordon L. Blackwell '60, a Furman trustee and former president of the Alumni Association, and his wife, Ceil Watson Blackwell '62, have made two generous commitments to the Forever Furman campaign. Both gifts will directly benefit the academic life of the university.

One will eventually endow the Gordon and Elizabeth Blackwell Professorship. This faculty position, to be established through an estate plan, will recognize and support the work of a pre-eminent teacher. The other gift will fund the central area of the expanded and renovated library, which will be the Elizabeth L. and Gordon W. Blackwell Atrium.

Gordon L. Blackwell noted that he and his wife "are grateful to God that He has enabled us to honor my parents with this enhancement to Furman's academic excellence."

In acknowledging the gift, President David Shi said, "I can think of no more appropriate tribute to Gordon and Lib Blackwell than these permanent reminders of what they have always been so passionate about — academic excellence at Furman."

Others who wish to honor the work and lives of the Blackwells are invited to contribute to the Blackwell Atrium. Call (864) 294-2475 or e-mail campaign@furman.edu for further information.



A distinguished professorship and the atrium of the expanded library will be named for Lib and Gordon Blackwell.