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Ring cycle

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RING CYCLE

After almost 50 years, an alumnus recovers his long lost class ring.



Hal Williams had just made the last payment on his Furman class ring when he accidentally left it at a Greer gas station.

"I went in to wash my hands and I put the ring on the sink," says Williams, who had been working part time at a Shell station on Wade Hampton Boulevard. "About 90 minutes later I noticed that my ring was missing. I went back to the bathroom and it was not there."

That was nearly 50 years ago.

"I just figured that the ring was long gone," says Williams, a 1951 graduate who now lives in Columbia, S.C. "I thought about it from time to time but I just knew that I would never see it again."

But good luck, a helpful alumnus and some sharp detective work by the Furman Alumni Office helped reunite Williams with his ring early this year.

Here's how the story unfolds:

About a year ago Charles Barnett '48, a retired dentist from Easley, S.C., was visiting his sister when she gave him the old ring and asked him if he might be able to track down its owner.

Barnett's brother-in-law, who owned a small dry cleaning business in Greer, had just passed away. Through the years he had collected rings, jewelry and other items left at his store, keeping them in a cigar box until customers reclaimed them. Barnett's sister came upon the ring while going through her late husband's effects.

"We have no idea how long it had been sitting in the box," says Barnett. "It could have been years. We assumed that someone left the ring and then could not go back to claim it because they did not have the same initials that were engraved in the ring."

Barnett put the word out among his classmates about the recovered ring, but the mystery was not easily solved. Age had taken a toll on the ring's identifying characteristics. The second digit on the graduation date had faded and the owner's initials, engraved on the inside of the ring, were tarnished almost to the point of being illegible.

Barnett turned the ring over to Wendy Hamilton '98, associate director of the Alumni Association, after the two met at the Cherydale dedication last October. Hamilton passed it along to Darlene Kleckley, alumni records specialist, who solved the mystery.

Using a magnifying glass, she was able to identify the first and third engraved initials on the inside of the ring as an H and a W. The symbols for the fraternity Theta Chi, which were on the ring's face, were legible.

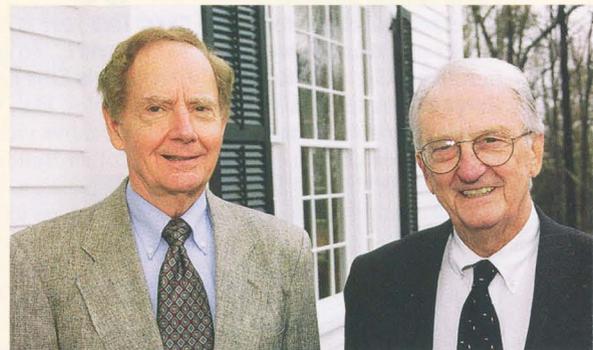
Kleckley rummaged through several Furman yearbooks from the early '50s until she found a Theta Chi fraternity member with those initials.

"When Darlene called me and told me she had my ring, I could not believe it," says Williams. "It was the shock of my life."

Thanks to overnight mail, Williams was reunited with his ring the next day. Now, he says, the ring never leaves his finger — not even when he washes his hands.

"Sometimes I'm afraid to take it off for fear of losing it," he says.

— John Roberts



Hal Williams (right) had the opportunity to thank Charles Barnett when they met for lunch at Furman.

of South Dakota. ■ Congressman **Baron Hill** of Indiana has been named to the state's Basketball Hall of Fame. ■ **Susan Tibbetts Ragan** is receptionist/administrative assistant to the youth pastor of Fellowship Bible Church in Houston, Texas.

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Next reunion in 2001

BIRTH: James B. and Linda Brewer **Leimbach**, a daughter, Emily Anita, November 8, Atlanta, Ga. James Leimbach is a corporate controller in Atlanta for the U.S. subsidiary of Lenze Corporation, a German manufacturing company based in Hameln.

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Next reunion in 2002

John R. Banka has established his own consulting firm, Project Partners International, in Warsaw, Poland. He has worked in the real estate development and project management business in Warsaw since 1996.

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Next reunion in 2003
Ward R. Keeney of Anderson,

S.C., is vice president and chief financial officer of The Beiers Group, Inc., the largest and oldest home inspection firm in South Carolina.

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Next reunion in 2004
Ann Greer Bahme is vice president of government affairs for the Coastal Corporation in Houston, Texas. She also serves on two non-profit boards benefiting children in the Houston area. ■ **John B. Bowden** has joined the law firm of Ashmore & Rabon in Greenville. ■ **John T. Frey**, clerk of the Fairfax County (Va.) Circuit Court, was the subject of a feature story in the *Fairfax Times*. ■ **Flynn T. Harrell** (honorary) received the 2000 Christian Action in Ecumenism Award from the South Carolina Christian Action Council. ■ **Thomas L. Lott** of Katy, Texas, staff geophysicist for Elf Exploration, has written a novel about the oil industry.

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This year is reunion!
H. Monte Dutton of Clinton, S.C., who covers NASCAR for

the *Gaston Gazette* in Gastonia, N.C., has been named Writer of the Year by the Eastern Motorsports Press Association. He received the Frank Blunk Memorial Award "in recognition of his outstanding journalistic efforts in support of motorsports." ■ **Vicki Dover Lambert** of Mowbray, South Africa, is lecturing and conducting research in the fields of energy balance and physical activity and health at the University of Cape Town (South Africa) Medical School. ■ **Donald T. Locke** has joined the Raleigh, N.C., office of Kilpatrick Stockton LLP as counsel in its business transactions practice group. ■ **Tony Moore** has moved to Elizabeth City, N.C., where he is pastor of Ramoth Gilead Baptist Church. ■ **Pamela Brown Richard** of Hurst, Texas, is a senior systems engineer with Bank of America. ■ "How to Collect Fishing Lures," an original work of short fiction by **George W. Singleton III**, was published last fall in the Raleigh, N.C., *News and Observer*. Singleton teaches fiction writing at the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and

Humanities and has published short stories in a variety of magazines and journals.

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Next reunion in 2001
Andy Buzby lives in Camp Hill, Pa., and is founder and president of Dispersion Technology Systems. ■ **Patricia Garrington Johnson** is a financial specialist with First Union Bank in Tarpon Springs, Fla. ■ **David Rice** has joined Ford, Simpson, Lively and Rice, a private pediatric practice in Winston-Salem, N.C. ■ **BIRTH: Raye Marchbanks '83** and **Glen Robert Carson** (M.A.), a daughter, Maria Raye Marchbanks Carson, July 19, Simpsonville, S.C. Glen Carson is director of testing in Spartanburg (S.C.) School District 4.

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Next reunion in 2002
Steven Craig and **Laurie Ritzenthaler Lemasters** have moved to Atlanta, Ga. Craig Lemasters has started Reliance Integramark, a financial insurance company, and Laurie Lemasters is a radiologist with Atlanta Radiology Consultants.