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Sailing the Eclipse Sea

Sixty people traveled to the Caribbean last February to see the solar eclipse with Furman's resident eclipse astronomer.

BY GUY OTTEWELL

At the suggestion of Guy Ottewell, Joyce Moore of Wanderlust Travel in Greenville worked with Furman's Division of Continuing Education to arrange a cruise to see the total eclipse of the sun that would pass through the Caribbean on February 26, 1998. She found a historic tall ship, the three-masted schooner "Sir Francis Drake," and it became booked up so fast that she had to find two more craft, which turned out to be luxurious French catamarans.

On February 21, about 60 guests from all across the United States, with a dozen crew members mostly from Caribbean islands, sailed from St. Martin southeast-by-south to St. Barts, St. Kitts and Antigua, anchoring off rockbound beaches and colonial harbor towns with tropical nightlife. On the day of the eclipse, the "Drake" and the catamarans left Antigua early.

I missed breakfast and came up in time to find us moving out between the capes at eight in the morning. Only one person had chosen to stay on Antigua: Jack, with whom, therefore, I had left my telescope and filter and tripod — the only telescope on the ship — after showing him how to operate them.

The day before had become solid with gray cloud, so that everyone was prepared for the worst — a not uncommon piece of stage-managing by the eclipse. And Martin said, too, that the forecast was for rougher seas, six- to eight-foot, to come in from the Atlantic. Now there was broken cloud, which seemed to cover 20 percent of the sky, or at later glances 80 or 50 percent — it might do anything. It kept us cool, and there was hope: blue openings appeared ahead of the sun for it to sail into. Looking back, we saw that Antigua was still roofed by cloud, though there might be sun along its southern wall.

The ship kept on nearly due south toward the middle of the great arch of sea, Guadeloupe far ahead. The swell came with the wind from the southeast — or did it? I noticed that if you stare at it, try to follow a single crest, you also begin to see it running in the opposite direction. This was the main broad swell, confused by dozens or hundreds of smaller patterns oriented otherwise; but from high in an airplane you can pick out the main swell without these doubts.

We debated how to arrange the deck. The mid deck under the mainsail and awning was full of wooden tables, which I rearranged a bit when they were not encumbered with people. Deck chairs, long and heavy, lay feet-inward on either side of the open part of the deck under the foresail. I lugged them all around and jammed them into a single line facing west. Some wanted this sail furled to clear the view to the 50-degree-altitude sun, but the ship's rolling would be worse without it, and we hoped to see the shadow-bands on it (no use spreading a bedsheet on the deck because all the bed sheets were red). I dragged the chairs forward so that they were just in the sun yet there was enough space before them for people to stand at the rail.

The dratted music was on again. I waited in secret impatience for my watch to say 10:50, then made my way back to the bridge and said to Martin: "Would you mind turning the music off? Something serious has happened and I have to make an announcement." I paraded before the tables and chairs, shouting: "Can I have your attention? We've received a radio report that something from outer space has touched down in the Pacific." After a bit of this I had to say, "I'm trying to keep a straight face," and John replied: "You're not doing a very good job of it!"

I thought it was a good way to vivify what was beginning to happen, in our as yet unchanged scene on the sea, to clarify the geometry. I pointed down 45 degrees at the point in the Pacific, a quarter of the way around the globe, where the penumbra had arrived. "We'll let you know when the next bulletin comes, in about an hour." That, of course, was when the fearful fishers out on the Pacific saw the sun disappear entirely as the core of the ominous Shadow reached Earth.

Some people had settled themselves on the small stern deck, so I had to run back and forth replaying my acts to them. As another interlude, the kids and I put on our pirate eyepatches and armed ourselves with kitchen knives which we borrowed from cook Joan and clenched in our teeth,

The three-masted schooner "Sir Francis Drake" sails along the island chain of the eastern Caribbean into the path of the eclipse (left). Passengers visit an old British fort on St. Kitts (right).
Waiting for totality, Guy Ottewell gives a lesson in estimating distances in the sky to show where planets will appear (below). Testing pinhole images of the sun: what will this size look like (center right)? Suki Glenn of Fallbrook, Calif., watches the partial eclipse through mylar spectacles (far right).

and we swarmed up and over the rail — “Your money or your lives! Captain, we’re commandeering your ship and you are now under our orders!” Actually, Tom had taken climbing lessons from me, up by porthole covers and all the other gadgets there on the side of a ship, but the two girls still didn’t dare, so they took another route to the deck, yelling “Avast!” when they got there so as to coordinate our storming action, which was well photographed by tolerant adults in deck chairs.

The sun passed noon and started down. An hour later (“The edge of the Shadow is reported to have reached the waters between Guadeloupe and Antigua — why, that’s where we are!”) the mylar spectacle-wearers competed to see the first nick. I told them when the middle of the dark Thing from outer space was terrifying the Galapagos, Colombia, Aruba. (“D’you think we’re in its path?” “I’m afraid it looks like we may be!”) Then we were asking each other: “is it beginning to get dark?” “Yes, the light is getting strange.” The light on the sea had concentrated into points on the crinkles of the waves, a universalized manifestation of the oiliness that had seemed to me to characterize other eclipses. This Sea Eclipse was simpler, geometrically purified of the interruptions of landscape.

The sky had not only deepened but cleared! Nothing was left but three pads of cloud clinging over the three islands on the rim of the scene — just what would be needed to show the Shadow! The “Channel” between Antigua and Guadeloupe was 50 miles wide, the umbra 80 or 90. It would first smite the composite cloud over the volcano island ahead (as we faced), then simultaneously Antigua to our right and Guadeloupe to our left as it rushed over us.

The temperature had dropped, and gusty little winds had sprung up around us, making the waves suddenly choppy.

People were photographing the crescents cast on the deck by holes in the straw hats they had bought, and by the grommets in the awning. Best was crossing eight fingers, because you could squeeze the six or seven images to a range of sizes and shapes.

I studied the sail, but if any shadow bands appeared on it they were lost in the material’s fluttering.

Martin turned off the engine, so that for the inner magical hour we were running south into the midst of the eclipse sea under sail alone, under the nine majestic sails, silent except for their thrumming in the headwind and our calls to each other.

How near were we to the centerline, which ran along the middle of the channel? John Cox was sitting at a table taking readings and ruling pencil lines of latitude and longitude, though with low accuracy because his ruler was not long enough to reach from side to side of the chart. (He said, “My wife’s job will be to tear me away from my toys and make me look at the eclipse!”) We perhaps came within a mile or two.

I gathered the children, telling them they were the planet-spotting squad and coaching them on where to look, thinking
their eyes would be sharpest. But the crew at the rail of the gangway below us, outside the kitchen, were the first: “Venus!” It was just above a white cloud trailing rightward from over Montserrat. For a few minutes it was a speck that some had to help others find; then it was stark.

I pointed behind us at the sunset colors in the east. They were not orange but light yellow, because of the purity of the air down to the horizon. And in the other direction the cloud over Montserrat went dark, and then the Shadow was on us.

The burst into totality.

Fumbling between eyepatch and mylar spectacles and binoculars, I missed the great prominence that most saw on the top (north-following) of the sun, near where the entry Diamond had shivered. I was trying to find a lying-position where I could steady the heavy binoculars on my face, and then to memorize the corona. It contained a number of nearly straight edges, especially a parallel set tangent to the two sides and roughly aligned with the sun’s equator. In other words, draw an H and tilt it somewhat to the left and put the moon in place of the crossbar.

What many people afterwards remarked on was the great brightness of the innermost corona. But that meant to me that the brightness graded off steeply: the corona expanded not very far all round, half a sun-radius before dropping off, because we were only just past solar minimum (on previous days we had seen only one large sunspot on the southern part and then it had disappeared). There were not the outsweping curve-edged petals of the 1995 Indian eclipse.

Two stars, so calm and available and distinct, in the field of the eclipsed sun! They were Jupiter, down to the right (five o’clock), and Mercury, up less steeply to the left (10 o’clock). Even I, though I had printed that they were six and eight sun-widths away, had thought of them as being cramped in close to the sun because of my own chart which had to show the sun at exaggerated size (I should have added an inset diagram showing the inner scene in true scale). Everyone saw them; some saw Mars higher up to the left and Saturn in the mast. I had suggested that if anyone was going to bother with stars they should look for Fomalhaut down from the sun and perhaps Acheron down lower, since these were southern stars. Wes (who had first seen Venus) called up to me about the stars he had seen, but from his attempt to describe I wasn’t sure whether he was talking about Jupiter or Fomalhaut, and the star he had seen away to the right might have been Altair, Deneb or Vega. (All the planets except Pluto were in the sky on this occasion. Uranus and Neptune being invisible in the tract between Jupiter and Venus.)

I had forgotten yet again to judge when before totality the moon becomes black and during totality to survey the whole scene, decide how black or blue the bulk of the sky is. Next chance in a year and a half. But the sail above me, had it gone gray? Vanished?

The end was the most thrilling. A thread of pink brilliance began to appear along the bottom curve, coruscating. I thought it was the chromosphere, but it seemed to be a twinkling mixture of pink and white flames. The white element surely could not be photosphere already appearing. Was it roots of the corona? The pink at least partly consisted of a forest of flares, at least two large ones. In fact it may all have been flares; seeing the chromosphere would have been surprising for such a central view of the eclipse.

Then the buds of brightness toward the right of this curve grew and burst into a Diamond that seemed not only far more brilliant than the entry-of-totality Diamond but at least double, a cluster of Diamonds set in the Ring of the shriveling corona.

When somebody afterwards asked me whether we had reached the centerline, I thought that it would have been hard to judge from whether the opening and closing Diamonds were opposite to each other. But the thin pink rim (whether chromosphere or not) that appeared before the second Diamond would have been sensitive to asymmetry, and so the fact that it was around the bottom — whereas the sun’s west was at lower right — could have meant we were just beyond the centerline.

The darkness swung around to the east, and sunrise in the west turned the cloud on Montserrat yellow-gray.

We noticed that the scene returns to normal daylight asymmetrically soon. Ten minutes after totality, the general light seems already as bright as it had been half an hour before. It must be there is the mind anticipates whatever the approaching condition — darkness after light, light after darkness — and is ready to detect and believe in it ahead of time. I could add to my Under-Standing of Eclipses graph of the falling and rising light a curve for the subjective light-level, dropping ahead of the descending curve, and rising ahead of the ascending curve.
The air had warmed again with the light, and the gusts and choppiness had dissipated, but clouds had grown again! Just a thin scrapping of white altocumulus that stretched toward us from the top of the Montserrat cloud, but could hardly have grown eastward from it against the wind, and must have condensed out of the blue sky to moderate again for us the tropical heat.

I found myself confronted by a deckful of people toasting me with champagne as if I had produced the eclipse. I had to toast them back, the passengers and the people who did the work, and I threw in the sun and the moon and the earth. (When we first came onto the ship and were being introduced I found myself being applauded, and I had to say that having the idea was easy; what I would have hated to have to do was all of Joyce’s complex work, the generalship.) Afterwards people said: “This is the best trip I’ve ever taken!” and some said without qualification: “This has been the best time of my life!” They might get things back into proportion later, but it was gratifying to hear. I felt that the whole was harmonious, the sea journey in all its aspects (islands, progression of days, weather) ascending to the eclipse like a musical movement climaxing near its end.

We turned serenely (circling portward) somewhere about the midst of the Guadeloupe Channel, which needed a name more expansive than channel: it was the Eclipse Sea. During the return cruise to our island I went out to the very tip of the widow’s net, where the ropes came together, and found this was the best perch of all. I sat astride the bowsprit holding onto the back-sloping stay of the flying jib (foremost of the three jib sails) and gazing forward across the sea; then, better still and more comfortable, sideways with the bowsprit like a bench, dangling my legs off it.

To my right, Antigua to which we were returning; in front, the volcanic island with the steam rolling off it; to my left, the loveliest view of the ship. The widow’s net swept down to it, the people on the deck seemed very distant. The narrow jib sail swept exactly away from me upward, holding itself out distinct from the layered stack of all the other sails, cutting to the heart of the blue sky crossed by a few sail-like wisps of cloud — the blue heart that the moon had darkened.

Three Stages of the Eclipse. The narrowing crescent a few minutes before totality (left). The corona, or atmosphere of the sun, during totality (center). The short polar brushes are visible at upper right and lower left; the equatorial streamers, in the other directions, are not expansive because the sun is near the minimum of its 11-year cycle of activity. About a million times fainter than the photosphere (or normally visible surface), the corona, unlike the photosphere, is harmless to look at; indeed, the eye can see more of the beautiful structure in it than most photographs show. Near the end of totality (right), pink flares and the chromosphere (innermost atmosphere) twinkle along the western edge, just before the bursting out of the second Diamond Ring — the showing of one point of the brilliant photosphere between mountains at the edge of the moon. Photographs by Mark McBride.
The smiling couple popped into the office and introduced themselves as Iowa residents passing through town on vacation.

“We saw the Furman sign and realized that’s where Guy Ottewell works,” they said excitedly. “We get his Astronomical Calendar every year. Could you tell us where his office is? We’d love to meet him.”

Directions in hand, they headed to Plyler Hall in search of the tall, lanky Englishman who, for 25 years, has produced his Astronomical Calendar from an office adjacent to the Furman physics department. The Calendar, crammed with diagrams, sketches, charts and essays on the stars and planets, has evolved from a first printing of 100 in 1974 to today’s distribution list of more than 20,000 people in 100 countries. Major publications cite Ottewell’s work, and he is recognized as an international authority on celestial events.

While Furman has afforded him a place to produce the Calendar, six companion pieces on astronomy and sundry other publications, Ottewell has provided the university with name recognition and international exposure. Says physics professor Bill Brantley, who brought Ottewell to Furman in the early 1970s. “In many ways, Guy’s efforts have put Furman on the map. I believe the Calendar is the best publication of its sort.”

Surely the most remarkable aspect of Ottewell’s journey is that, when it comes to the stars, he is largely self-taught. And while astronomy may be his bread and butter, he is a man of myriad talents.

His drawings and paintings adorn the covers of his publications. He is a student of languages, among them Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian and Hebrew. He works tirelessly on behalf of Amnesty International, the organization devoted to alleviating the plight of prisoners of conscience, and has even published a book, Think Like a Mother, filled with copies of photographs depicting human rights violations. (For a complete list of Ottewell’s works, visit his Universal Workshop homepage at www.kalend.com.)

Other Ottewell publications range from the profound to the whimsical and include games, poetry, a print series, and a critical analysis of the Furman campus. There’s even a manual (The Winged Velocipede) describing how to transport one’s bicycle by plane or train — perhaps his most appropriate work, since he has cycled around much of the world and cuts a distinctive figure as he pedals to and from campus.

Ottewell’s wide-ranging interests and his contributions to the education of others have earned him an honorary membership in Furman’s chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the prestigious academic honor society into which he was inducted last spring. In recognizing Ottewell, the chapter praised him as a “distinguished astronomer, linguist, writer, artist and humanitarian” whose life represents the “epitome of the human potential to learn, to illuminate, and to serve.”

Educated at King’s College School in Wimbledon, Pembroke College in Cambridge, and the University of Manchester, Ottewell went on to serve in the British army and later spent several years traveling in the Middle East and Mediterranean, where his interest in the stars grew.

He came to the United States in the late sixties as a cataloguer of the Middle Eastern collection at the University of California at Los Angeles. There, “in spite of the smog and pollution,” he first became serious about astronomy. But it was while helping to establish a library on the Navajo Reservation in the high desert of Arizona that his interest in celestial events developed more fully.

By 1970 his travels brought him to Greenville, where his wife was starting a Montessori school. The Brantleys’ young children enrolled, and the couples established a friendship.

One evening, Brantley says he and Ottewell began discussing astronomy, “and I quickly realized he knew more about the night sky than I did.” At the time, the physics department needed a secretary, and Ottewell was working in the dye room at Renfrew Mill in Travelers Rest. When offered the job, Ottewell accepted.

The secretary doubled for a while as an informal guest lecturer in astronomy classes. Then one day, Ottewell tossed a 12-page handout on Brantley’s desk and said he had been thinking of producing an astronomical calendar. Brantley reviewed the piece and quickly proposed that the physics department publish it.

Since the release of that first calendar for 1974, Ottewell has taught himself computer programming and desktop publishing — and learned to negotiate with printers. His Calendar is now a 72-page tome packed with such information as a monthly diary of celestial events, maps of the evening sky, and advice for everyone from the novice to the astronomy buff.

But while the Calendar is his first priority, his homemade shelves, supported by cinderblocks, contain files brimming with potential publications. As Ottewell says, “The things I’ve done are really just the tip of the iceberg.” One project in the works: a novelized version of the tales of ancient Troy.

For now, though, his focus is the 1999 Astronomical Calendar. “Every year I think it’s the last time I’ll do it, because it is a tremendous amount of work,” he says. “But I do get a kick out of it once it all comes together.”

Sky-watchers throughout the world no doubt hope he gets that “kick” for years to come.

— Jim Stewart
The front entrance of Johns Hall features large white columns similar to those on the front of the Charles E. Daniel Memorial Chapel.
AN ENGAGING PLACE TO LEARN

Johns Hall is designed to promote a collegial, student-centered environment.

John E. Johns Hall has two dramatic entrances. The north, or front, entrance is distinguished by large white columns that echo the smaller columns on the front of the Joseph B. Earle Infirmary. The other entrance is an arched portal that extends through the center of the building and is topped by a bridge connecting the north and south wings of the second floor. You can enter the building through glass doors inside the portal or you can simply walk through it.

Once inside, you become aware of cool open spaces punctuated by an occasional splash of color on the carpet and walls. Both the architectural design and the subdued colors in Johns Hall yield center stage to the academic enterprise it houses.

As you walk through the halls, you see students and professors absorbed in their work. With the aid of the latest electronic technology, a psychology class may be watching an animation showing the damage to a brain caused by Alzheimer’s disease. A sociology class may be analyzing the results of a survey of the homeless in Greenville County. Political science students may be taking part in a simulated session of the U.S. House of Representatives.

But what may surprise you most is that many students stay in Johns Hall when they’re not in class. Just about any time of day you will find students studying in the comfortable chairs in the common areas or gathered around small tables for after-class discussions. Other students, faculty and staff gather to study or talk on the outdoor patio.

The patio between Johns Hall and Furman Hall has already become a favorite gathering place for faculty, staff and students.
The planning for Johns Hall began in 1995, when the chairs of the psychology, sociology and political science departments met with Allen Freeman and Douglas Rackley of Freeman & Major, a Greenville architectural firm. "We stressed the concept of 'total academic immersion,'" says Gil Einstein, chair of the psychology department. "We told them we wanted a building with physical spaces that encourage academic immersion, and they have given us just what we asked for. The common areas, departmental lounges, faculty offices, work areas, research labs, computer and media areas, and the outdoor patio are all designed with a collegial, student-centered academic environment in mind."

According to Einstein, Johns Hall provides the perfect environment for engaged learning, which has become the focus of Furman's academic program. "In a setting like this," he says, "students see learning not as a task to be accomplished for external rewards but rather as an inherently interesting, satisfying experience that is fueled by the thrill of intellectual discovery."

President David Shi, who played a major role in planning Johns Hall, is Furman's leading proponent of engaged learning. At the dedication ceremony on April 29, he said, "In recent years, as we have recognized the need for college students to become more creative and independent in their thinking and to adjust more easily to new technology, Furman has begun to promote more active forms of learning. Johns Hall was designed and built with this in mind."

The three academic departments in Johns Hall occupy space that is custom-designed for their needs. Each department has a spacious suite with a large reception area, kitchen, lounge, faculty offices, multimedia classrooms, seminar rooms and computer labs. Psychology, on the south end of the second floor, has outstanding laboratory facilities for animal and human research. The Bailey Simulation Room is equipped with technology that enables political science students to take part in simulated sessions of the Organization of African Unity and the European Parliament, as well as the U.S. House of Representatives. All three departments have offices for students working on research projects.

The Office of International Education, which coordinates international student activities and works to improve Furman's ties to the international community both locally and throughout the world, is located on the first floor of Johns Hall, near the political science department. Bill Lavery, professor of history, is director of international education.

The Christian A. Johnson Center for Engaged Learning occupies the end of the north wing on the second floor. The center coordinates engaged learning activities and helps students acquire firsthand experience in fields related to their career interests. It houses the Office of Educational Services, directed by Judith Bainbridge; the Office of Assistant Academic Dean for Research and Internships Charles Brock; and the center's director, Glen Halva-Neuhauer, Dana Associate Professor of Political Science.

As the newest building on campus, Johns Hall stands at the heart of the university, both literally and figuratively. Not only does it occupy a central place near the other academic buildings, but the kind of learning that takes place in Johns Hall is fundamental to Furman's academic program.

Psychology students and anyone else attending meetings in the Martha Johns Room have a beautiful view of the fountains in front of the library (above). One of the multi-media classrooms in Johns Hall, Bailey Simulation Room was designed and equipped to allow students to take part in simulated sessions of political organizations (below).
A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

FURMAN

2001

Over the years, the dedicated efforts of faculty, students, staff, alumni, and friends have brought Furman University to a position of strength and quality that far surpasses what our founders and early graduates dreamed possible.

Today, as we near the end of a century, the university is poised to claim its deserved place among the nation’s finest liberal arts colleges. Not since the late 1950s, when the campus was relocated from downtown Greenville to its current location, has Furman University experienced such dramatic change or confronted such exciting possibilities.

During the last five years, the university has expanded and upgraded its physical facilities to address the increase in enrollment to 2,550 students that has gradually occurred over the last 20 years. We have constructed two new classroom buildings — Richard W. Riley Hall and John E. Johns Hall — a new chapel, a residential apartment complex, and a multipurpose arena, soccer stadium and tennis center. The student center has also doubled in size, and the Herring Music Pavilion has been added to the Daniel Music Building. At the same time, we have planted more than 400 trees!

These improvements have enhanced every aspect of campus activity — academics, the arts, student services, athletics, and spiritual life. But the changes at Furman go beyond bricks and mortar and landscaping. Each year we are receiving record numbers of admissions applications. Furman has become known as a “hot” college, and more students than ever before want to enroll and “drink from wisdom’s fountain pure.”

At the same time, alumni and friends are providing increasing levels of financial support and volunteer leadership. As of the end of the academic year 1997-98, more than 50 percent of Furman’s alumni contributed to the university’s annual fund — a remarkable feat accomplished last year by just five universities with 20,000 or more alumni.

The university is also garnering national attention for creating a new type of liberal arts experience — engaged learning — that offers students more opportunities to learn by doing and to put into practice the theories and methods learned from textbooks and lectures.

But this is just the beginning. We have a compelling vision for what this great university can become, and we have the momentum and commitment to turn our dreams into reality.

After more than two years of wide-ranging discussion and debate among trustees, faculty, staff, students, parents, and alumni, we have drafted a bold new strategic
plan that gives our university the vision, momentum, and commitment to turn dreams into reality. It’s called *Furman 2001: A Strategic Plan for the 21st Century*.

The Furman we know today has inherited a rich legacy of distinctive values and lofty intentions. In the year 2001, the university will be 175 years old — nearly two centuries having passed since its founding, more than 130 years since the Civil War temporarily closed its doors, almost another half century since its move to a new campus, and only a decade removed from its split with the South Carolina Baptist Convention. The 175th anniversary will be a time to remember while also prompting us to imagine what a new century will bring. It is at this critical juncture that we have developed a stimulating plan that outlines the strategies and initiatives necessary for Furman to be one of the nation’s very best liberal arts colleges.

Our present is bright — and our future challenging. For all of its evident progress, Furman has a much smaller endowment than other schools of its stature and quality. Competition for the best students and faculty has intensified, and the relentless advance of expensive new technologies requires innovative approaches to instruction, curriculum, support services and programs, and building design. Moreover, despite successful efforts to reduce costs and improve efficiency, the overall expense of providing a first-rate college education is increasing each year.

Yet such challenges only strengthen our resolve and make manifest the importance of this new strategic plan. Grounded in our distinguished past and based on our exceptional commitment to the development of the whole person, this blueprint for greatness will help Furman thrive amid the increasingly technological society of the 21st century.

Yes, Furman is changing, as it must. But it will continue to be an inviting crossroads where character and characters, architecture and landscape intersect, a place where young people are encouraged to design a way of life in the process of gaining knowledge, a college where history, civility, and concerns of the spirit and social justice still matter.

What will be your role in helping to implement *Furman 2001: A Strategic Plan for the 21st Century*? This new plan for a new century embodies our vision for Furman’s almost unlimited potential. We — you and I — want Furman to continue to be a special place and an even greater university. But it won’t happen without your commitment and that of thousands of other alumni, parents, and friends. Consider what role you can play in this effort; give Furman your time, talent, and resources; and then plan to join us on campus in 2001 for a spectacular celebration of our heritage and progress.

David E. Shi

[Signature]
"The ideals of liberal learning, civic virtue, spiritual reflection, and social responsibility remain firmly in place and give direction to all that we do."

David E. Shi
Inaugural Address
The Strategic Planning Committee, composed of representatives of all segments of the university community, studied major issues affecting higher education in general and Furman in particular. Assisted by numerous working groups, the committee considered Furman’s institutional identity as shaped by its history and religious heritage and by the hopes and dreams of generations of leaders and alumni. It examined Furman’s academic program, financial constraints, enrollment goals, space and equipment needs, intercollegiate athletics, and the impact of information technology on the university. It also identified areas of great strength and areas where improvement is needed.

The committee reaffirmed Furman’s primary mission as a liberal arts college that seeks to:

- Enable students to play an active role in the educational process, both inside and outside the classroom
- Provide a model of excellence in engaged learning, technological sophistication and close faculty-student relationships
- Foster the overall development of students — intellectual, artistic, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual
- Promote diversity, openness, honesty, civic responsibility, and global awareness

With these objectives in mind, the Strategic Planning Committee drafted a plan of action that will enhance Furman’s quality and reputation, reaffirm its commitment to liberal learning within a spiritual and ethical context, and strengthen its financial resources.

Furman 2001: A Strategic Plan for the 21st Century identifies areas of strategic importance, establishes broad goals, and recommends specific ways to achieve those goals.
The five strategic goals adopted by the Strategic Planning Committee concern every facet of university life. The first goal addresses the educational program and the need to provide more active forms of learning. The next two goals focus directly on students. One of them reflects Furman’s renewed commitment to developing well-rounded, well-adjusted and self-confident young people, while the other suggests ways for Furman to attract superior students with a wider variety of strengths, interests and backgrounds.

The fourth goal emphasizes the unique sense of community that exists at Furman and the need to recognize and encourage greater involvement of the staff, alumni and friends. The last goal is the most far-reaching because it will enable Furman to have the faculty and staff, physical facilities and financial resources that will truly reflect the university’s quality and aspirations.

If these five goals are achieved by 2001, Furman will be well prepared for the 21st century:

- Enhance the intellectual quality and lifelong value of a Furman education by making engaged learning the focus of the academic program
- Strengthen Furman’s long-standing commitment to the overall development of its students
- Enroll an increasingly selective student body that reflects high academic achievement, well-rounded interests, and diverse cultural and racial backgrounds
- Enhance the sense of community and involvement among staff, alumni and friends
- Position Furman by the year 2001 to move into the top quartile of the 160 national liberal arts colleges by enhancing the human, physical and financial resources of the university
“My internship helped me get my foot in the door and gain valuable professional contacts. It will look great on my resume.”

Ford Blakely ’97
Enhance the intellectual quality and lifelong value of a Furman education by making engaged learning the focus of the academic program.

The technological revolution has transformed business, education, and everyday life. Companies looking for new employees are seeking college graduates with good computer and foreign language skills and practical experience. All kinds of organizations are looking for independent and creative thinkers, who adjust well to changing technology and work well with others.

In response, colleges have begun to revise the way they teach, and Furman is in the forefront of this movement. In recent years, the focus of Furman’s academic program has promoted more active forms of learning. Now students work as learning partners with professors to help plan their courses, work on team projects, conduct research, study off campus, make class presentations, participate in debates, and deliver papers at professional meetings. About one-third of the students hold internships or take part in research projects related to their career interests. Many students study abroad in one of Furman’s international programs. Yet the student demand for this kind of experience exceeds the opportunities that are now available. To build on Furman’s strength in this area and to assure the value of a Furman education in today’s world, we will:

- Support a Center for Engaged Learning that will conceive and coordinate activities to help students acquire firsthand experience in fields related to their postgraduate interests
- Make it possible for every student to take part in at least one internship, off-campus study program, research program, or community service project
- Encourage faculty to offer more courses that are taught from a broad perspective using several different disciplines
- Emphasize the study of the ethical and moral dimensions of contemporary life
- Establish a program of summer faculty seminars abroad that will stimulate greater global awareness and increased commitment to interdisciplinary study
- Strengthen the James B. Duke Library so that it will be a leader among liberal arts colleges in helping people retrieve information, apply information technology, develop critical thinking and embrace lifelong learning
“The thing that’s unique about Furman is its sense of community. You don’t get lost in the crowd.”

Anna Austin ’98
Strengthen Furman’s long-standing commitment to the overall development of its students

According to Furman’s Mission and Purpose Statement, the university is committed to developing “the whole person — intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.” This major commitment sets Furman apart from many other colleges.

A drive around the campus reveals tangible evidence of Furman’s concern for students’ intellectual, spiritual, physical and social well-being. Three recent academic buildings — Richard W. Riley Hall for computer science and mathematics, John E. Johns Hall for the social sciences, and Nan Trammell Herring Music Pavilion — provide additional space for classrooms, laboratories and ensemble rehearsals. The new Charles Ezra Daniel Memorial Chapel hosts a wide range of religious services and programs.

With the addition of the Eugene E. Stone III Soccer Stadium, Minor Herndon Mickel Tennis Center, Timmons Arena, Irwin Belk Complex for Track and Field, the REK Center for Intercollegiate Golf, and new intramural fields, Furman students have access to the finest college athletic facilities in the country. The University Center, which is now undergoing extensive expansion and renovation, will soon be the true center of student life and activities.

While the university is meeting the physical needs of students, their developmental needs — both social and emotional — are more complicated and require more attention. Students need to achieve a sense of their own identity in the face of disintegrating families, religious questioning, and social upheaval. As future leaders in a multicultural society, students should also acquire a heightened respect for people with different backgrounds and different perspectives. To develop more well-rounded, well-adjusted and self-confident students, we will:

- Enhance career preparation as an ongoing process and create new links to the world of work through expanded contacts with alumni and area businesses and agencies
- Offer educational activities for faculty and staff to increase their knowledge of the developmental needs of undergraduates and improve their effectiveness in working with them
- Provide a high quality intercollegiate athletics program for students at a reasonable cost to the university and better integrate athletic staff and programs into campus life
“Furman seeks highly motivated students with inquisitive minds, varied perspectives, a sense of personal integrity and moral responsibility, and the potential to be leaders and to make future contributions to society.”

Furman University
Statement of Mission and Purpose
Enroll an increasingly selective student body that reflects high academic achievement, well-rounded interests, and diverse cultural and racial backgrounds.

Furman remains committed to an undergraduate enrollment of approximately 2,550. For all of the university’s recent success in attracting more and better applicants, changing conditions have affected how we recruit students. As a selective liberal arts college, Furman now competes with prestigious private colleges that have much larger endowments and with public universities whose cost is significantly less. With the increasing cost of a college education, students are demanding more financial aid than ever before and often choose the school that makes the highest offer.

These circumstances require new and imaginative strategies in admissions and financial aid. They also require a comprehensive, university-wide public relations effort to market the university more effectively and to increase Furman’s name recognition beyond the Southeast. To ensure that Furman attracts a vibrant student body composed of students with a wide variety of academic and social strengths, interests and backgrounds, we will:

- Increase the pool of applicants to 3,800
- Make more efficient use of financial aid funds to attract a greater number of superior students and to slow the growth of financial aid
- Implement an aggressive admissions marketing program centered on increased contacts, recruitment in new areas, and greater alumni involvement
- Launch a comprehensive new marketing plan to increase Furman’s visibility in the region and the nation
- Allocate more financial and human resources to the admissions, financial aid and multicultural affairs offices to recruit more minority and international students
Strengthen the sense of community and involvement among staff, alumni and friends

The university has long taken pride in being a caring community. The “Furman family” is often used to refer to students, faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, parents, and others who are closely connected with the university. This real sense of community sets Furman apart from many other institutions.

As community members, the Furman staff plays a special role in the life of the university. Staff members not only provide essential services for the educational program, but they also promote a sense of warmth, helpfulness and belonging for all members of the community.

In recent years, the goodwill and support of alumni and other friends off campus have also become more significant. Since the question of governance was settled in 1992, a new sense of institutional ownership and responsibility has developed among Furman’s diverse supporters.

To enhance the sense of community and involvement among staff, alumni and friends, we will:

- Improve the recognition and support of staff members as they fulfill their key roles on campus
- Implement new methods and programs to enhance campus communication and employee recognition
- Emphasize the important role of alumni and friends through increased recognition and communication
“We have the luxury of focusing on more than mere survival; our challenge is to determine at what level we will excel.”

David E. Shi
Inaugural Address
Position Furman by the year 2001 to move into the top quartile of national liberal arts colleges by enhancing the human, physical and financial resources of the university.

In American higher education, faculty salaries have become an important measure of institutional quality. At Furman, the level of faculty compensation has not kept pace with salaries at other national liberal arts colleges. At the same time, the university is just beginning to implement a comprehensive system of staff assessment.

Since the move to the present location, Furman has gained national recognition for its beautiful campus. Recent construction projects — Daniel Chapel, Johns Hall, Herring Music Pavilion, Timmons Arena, the residential complex, and the expanded student center — have enhanced the campus and addressed many of the needs resulting from an increase in the size of the faculty, staff and student body over the past 20 years. However, the university must still renovate the library, Furman Hall and Plyler Hall and repair and update a physical plant that will soon be 50 years old.

After suffering financial losses with the separation from the South Carolina Baptist Convention in 1992, Furman now enjoys a strong financial position — thanks in large part to increased support from trustees, alumni and friends. However, the university needs a significantly larger endowment to support engaged learning activities, provide student scholarships, enhance faculty salaries and accomplish its other strategic goals.

To ensure that Furman has the faculty and staff, physical facilities and financial resources to compete successfully with other leading liberal arts colleges, we will:

- Increase faculty salaries to be more competitive with our regional peers
- Establish a more formal structure to support competitive and equitable salaries and a reward system
- Allocate an additional $1 million per year for planned maintenance in the annual operating budget
- Increase the university endowment to $275 million
- Maintain the percentage of alumni annual giving at 50 percent and increase the size of the average annual gift
- Launch and complete a record-breaking fund-raising campaign to implement the strategic plan
Furman 2001: A Strategic Plan for the 21st Century represents the collective wisdom and the creative thinking of many in the Furman community. It provides an ambitious plan that will channel our energy and resources in the most strategic directions. Yet this plan is not final, nor will it ever be. As circumstances change and new challenges and opportunities emerge, we will adapt this plan to meet our extraordinary ambitions for the flagship private college in South Carolina.

If it is true that a backward glance enables us to see the future, Furman is sure to have a very bright future. While some colleges have greater financial resources, Furman has several important advantages. Because of its strong intellectual and religious heritage, Furman provides a distinct educational experience that prepares students for fulfilling lives, as well as successful careers. The university also enjoys rising levels of support from a growing number of alumni and friends. With these strengths and the successful completion of Furman 2001: A Strategic Plan for the 21st Century, Furman will join the ranks of the nation’s finest liberal arts colleges.

“There’s a Furman attitude, a commitment to overall excellence, that I don’t think many schools can match.”

Philly Jones ’95
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

David E. Shi, Chair
President, Furman University

Tony Arrington
Professor of Chemistry

Don Lineback
Vice President for Development

Janis Bandelin
Librarian

Edgar McKnight
William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of Religion

John Block
Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics

Richard Nelson
Director of Computing & Information Services

Jane Chew
Professor of Modern Languages

Elaine Nocks
Professor of Psychology

Marty Cook
Professor of Mathematics

Linda Sarratt
Budget Services Director

Susan D’Amato
Associate Academic Dean

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Philip Winstead
Coordinator of Institutional Planning and Research

Wendy Libby
Vice President for Business Affairs

Susan Zeiger
Director of Personnel
Furman University

Read the complete text of Furman's strategic plan at www.furman.edu/admin.html.
THE RIGHT MAN AT THE RIGHT TIME

WITH CIVILITY AND PERSISTENCE,
DICK RILEY HAS WON OVER HIS FOES ON CAPITOL HILL
AND STRENGTHENED THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

BY SAM HODGES
Typically, U.S. Secretaries of Education hold office just two or three years, during which they make grand critical pronouncements about the state of education and the education establishment, then drop out before dirtying themselves with the hard work of building coalitions to effect substantive, long-term change.

Richard W. Riley ’54 is a conspicuous exception. He is in his sixth year as Education Secretary. No one else has held that position as long. During his tenure, he has visited 48 states and 900 schools and has immersed himself in all manner of education issues, from the contentious to the mundane. Working with the opposition Republican majority in Congress, he has been a bloodhound for common ground. When compromise has seemed unwise, he has backed away.

Always with civility.

“It’s his personality and his integrity that allow him to work with so many competing philosophies and agendas, and to maintain respect and rapport with people on both sides of the aisle,” said Steve Gunderson, a former Republican congressman from Wisconsin who served on the House Education and Workforce Committee. “He’s just a plain good guy.”

Those who favor Riley’s centrist-Democrat approach to education policy are even more effusive.

“I think he’s the best Education Secretary the country has had,” said John F. Jennings, director of the Center on Education Policy, an independent, Washington-based advocacy group for public schools. “You get the impression that he just wants to do the best he can at this point in his life to make schools better. It’s not a business that’s going to be done in one week or one year. It’s a business you have to continue to work at, and that’s what he’s about.”

Riley, 65, shows no weariness, despite serving in a period of divided government and in an administration distracted by investigations of President Clinton and other Cabinet members. Friends say the famously straight-laced Riley is troubled by Clinton’s admission to having had an affair and lied about it. But rather than use the enveloping scandal as an excuse to walk away, Riley seems actually to have stepped up the pace for the education agenda he has helped craft, recently releasing (with Attorney General Janet Reno) a report on school violence and speaking on various education subjects in several western states.

During an interview in his modestly appointed sixth-floor office at the Education Department, overlooking Independence Avenue and the National Air & Space Museum, Riley, a grandfather of nine, described himself as renewed by his work.

“This is the center of the free world, so anyone’s lucky to be here and have a role in what happens,” he said. “But education is now the nation’s number one priority. To be here and have your subject be number one — well, it’s just kind of amazing.”

Persistence and education are related themes in Dick Riley’s life.

He was born in Greenville into a middle-class, Methodist family. He attended Greenville public schools, then Furman, where he was president of the men’s Student
Council and an honors graduate. He went on to study law at the University of South Carolina.

Riley was in the Navy, aboard a mine sweeper, when he was struck by rheumatoid spondylitis — arthritis of the spine. It left him with a permanent forward stoop, as if he carries an invisible anvil on his back. Part of the Riley legend is that he endured the early, most painful period of the disease without taking even an aspirin, out of fear of becoming addicted to painkillers.

As a young Greenville lawyer, Riley entered politics. He served 14 years as a Democrat in the state legislature, with education one of his top policy concerns. In 1970, he risked his political popularity — and personal safety — by outspokenly advocating cooperation with court-ordered integration of the Greenville public schools. He and his wife, Ann, better known as “Tunky,” also kept their four children in the public schools when many white Greenville parents of means chose otherwise.

Few political observers gave Riley much of a chance when he ran for governor in 1978. But by starting early, planning carefully and working exhaustively, he upset Lt. Gov. Brantley Harvey in the Democratic Party primary. He went on to win the general election, and was re-elected four years later by an overwhelming majority.

Riley made education reform his focus as governor. He went all over the state, meeting with business and civic leaders, to sell a plan that called for teacher pay raises, stiffer graduation requirements, overall higher standards and state intervention if low-performing school systems did not measure up. To pay for the reform, he proposed an extra penny sales tax dedicated to education.

At the outset, legislators showed little enthusiasm, especially about the penny. But in the end Riley brought significant pressure to bear, particularly from business leaders who were convinced the state had to have a better-educated work force. The reform, penny and all, went through. And Riley became known nationally as an “education governor.” Among those he impressed was the young governor of another Southern state — Arkansas’ Bill Clinton.

After Riley’s second term ended in 1987, he returned to the practice of corporate law. But he kept his hand in education, not least by raising money for Furman and teaching part time in its political science department.

Clinton’s election as president in 1992 marked Riley’s re-entry into politics. He served first on Clinton’s transition team, supervising undersecretary appointments. Then Clinton named him U.S. Secretary of Education.

Within months, a vacancy had occurred on the U.S. Supreme Court, and Clinton had Riley high on the list of possible nominees. Some say the appointment was his for the asking. Riley thought about it, then withdrew from consideration.

Persistence again. He would continue as Education Secretary.

One of the stories told on Dick and Tunky Riley concerns a dinner party they attended during their early days in Washington. They needed a ride home, and obtained one from a couple they had been seated near. Only later did they discover their chauffeurs were Ben Bradlee, former editor of the Washington Post, and his wife, writer Sally Quinn.

If Riley lacked knowledge of Washington’s power elite, he knew how to build political coalitions. During his first two years as Education Secretary, he had a Democratic Congress to work with and a handful of fairly sympathetic Republican moderates.

“We were really able to get into place some very significant education foundations,” Riley recalled. “We did it without a whole lot of fanfare, and I think we were able to get more done because of that.”

Riley helped push through Goals 2000, which provides money to the states for reform initiatives and to raise standards in public schools. He succeeded with the School-to-Work Opportunity Act, another funding bill for improving local technical education. Congress followed his recommendation and passed the Improve America’s Schools Act, actually a re-authorization of a major funding bill aimed at helping poor children get a
better education. He also helped to establish direct government loans for college students and pushed through a boost in Pell Grants, a college scholarship program for the poor.

With Goals 2000, he spent considerable time on the road, preaching innovation and higher standards.

"It was more than an act," he said. "It was working with the different states, working with teachers, principals, superintendents, to begin to get the standards process to scale. . . . Everywhere I go now, they're talking about standards. Something's right about them. Something's wrong about them. But they're talking, and that is wonderful pro-education conversation to be going on in the country."

Riley also worked to improve the widely criticized Department of Education, streamlining regulations and consolidating programs. At Clinton's request, he published a guidebook for what is permissible in school prayer under Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and sent every school superintendent in the country a copy. That common-sense act has been credited with clearing up confusion and preventing litigation.

But all his early efforts were threatened when Republicans took control of Congress in 1994. Many in the new majority, particularly House freshmen, questioned the whole idea of a federal role in education.

Even a measure like Goals 2000, which left the details to the states, was characterized as Washington trying to run people's lives. The opposition's idea of reform was tax credits, or vouchers, so that more people could afford to put their kids in private schools. Many within the GOP argued vigorously for eliminating the Department of Education.

Suddenly, Riley had to play defense. And he proved good at it. Republicans found him a disarming opponent, in part because he didn't yell back at them, but also because of his background.

After all, he was a corporate lawyer from the South who had worked closely with his state's business leaders.

"He's always able to sit down with people and say, 'Look, I'm a governor, a Southern governor. You think I'm the guy who is going to take control of your local school?"' said Steve Gunderson, who as a GOP congressman from Wisconsin unsuccessfully proposed merging the Education and Labor departments. "He was the right guy at the right time. If Clinton had made (Michael) Dukakis Secretary of Education, we'd have had a holy war."

Riley asserts that Democrats have "won the fight" over the federal role in education. That declaration seems premature. But the early Republican energy for challenging the Democrats' education reforms, and for dismantling the Education Department, founndered. They lost public support during the government shutdown.

Then, in the 1996 presidential campaign, Clinton championed his education reforms, while Republican candidate Bob Dole criticized them and the teachers' unions, and resurrected the idea of abolishing the Education Department. Clinton's comfortable victory seemed at least a modest validation of the Clinton-Riley education agenda.

On the day it became clear that Riley would remain as Education Secretary for Clinton's second term, employees of the Education Department lined the sixth-floor corridor to cheer him.

"We've had people who occupied his office, then left and said a lot of negative things," said Stanley Cohen, a regulations quality officer at Education. "Secretary Riley really believes in the department and in us. I've been here 20 years, since this was the old Office of Education. I've never seen morale so high."

Although Clinton won re-election in 1996, Republicans retained control of Congress, which appeared to limit prospects for major new education measures. But the chance of a historic balanced budget agreement made both sides eager to work together. The final agreement included various Clinton-Riley initiatives: the Hope Scholarship, a $1,500 college tuition tax credit; a "lifetime learning" tax credit for adults who go back to school; expanded Pell Grants; and deductability of interest on student loans.

Clinton went on to propose much bigger things — a national program to reduce
public school class size and to repair aging public school buildings — and his increasing popularity suggested a good chance of success. But a settlement with tobacco companies, which was to fund the big new education bills, fell through. And as the months have passed, Clinton’s strength even with Democrats in Congress has been undercut by his admission of an affair with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. Meanwhile, Republicans have pushed their own education agenda and resumed their challenge of some Clinton-Riley initiatives already in place.

So instead of standing behind Clinton at bill-signing ceremonies, Riley has been spending considerable time explaining and defending the administration’s support of bilingual education, national tests and the “e-rate” discount for schools and libraries hooking up to the Internet. Focusing on the possible, he travels often to promote business partnerships with public schools and a favorite program of his called “America Reads,” which recruits college students to tutor struggling young readers.

Riley has been indispensable ballast for an administration that has needed it. Even those who disagree with him recognize his commitment. For example, David S. Broder of the Washington Post, in a column taking issue with a position adopted by Riley, called him “one of the most decent and dedicated public servants of our time.” Those who work full time in education are even more emphatic witnesses.

“He never stops,” said Anne Bryant, executive director of the National School Boards Association in Alexandria, Va. “At his age, with grandchildren, he could well say, ‘I’m out of here.’ But he doesn’t because he knows how critical leadership on education is today. Every single day we in the education community thank our lucky stars he has stayed in office.”

The Rileys have become Washingtonians of the here-to-de-government sort, occupying a high-rise condominium on Connecticut Avenue not far from downtown. Because two of their children live in the area, they have grandchildren to babysit. But they also take the subway to museum exhibits, concerts and plays.

Friends say Riley remains tight with a dollar, flying coach on government business and whistling in disbelief at Washington prices. They also say he treats everybody he meets, from the renowned to the obscure, with the same respect and kindness.

Last summer, Riley was rumored to be the next U.S. ambassador to Ireland. He was clearly interested. His family roots are in Ireland, and he and his wife have visited there many times. He conceded in interviews that the chance to help advance peaceful relations between Ireland and Northern Ireland was an immensely appealing reason to seek the appointment.

But in the end, Riley stayed put, even though the ambassadorship would have taken him out of the country for the painful next act — perhaps even the dénouement — of the Clinton administration.

The reason given by the longest serving Education Secretary was work-related, and entirely in character.

“We’ve got so much going on.”

As governor of South Carolina, Dick Riley was instrumental in founding the S.C. Governors School for the Arts, which has been held on the Furman campus for 18 years. Riley returned to Greenville last spring to speak at the groundbreaking for the permanent home of the school on the old men’s campus.

Sam Hodges ’77 is currently a Washington correspondent with The Mobile Register in Alabama. Before moving to Washington, he was a feature writer for the Orlando Sentinel in Florida and a reporter for the Post-Herald in Birmingham, Ala. He is the author of the novel B-Four, published by St. Martin’s Press in 1992, and co-editor of Letters to Amma, a collection of Civil War letters written by his great-great-grandfather, Marion Hill Fitzpatrick, to be published by Mercer Press this fall.
AMBASSADORS ON TOUR

BY JOHN ROBERTS
U.S. AMBASSADORS AND OTHER OFFICIALS SPEND A DAY AT FURMAN DISCUSSING TRADE AND INVESTMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

Last October, most Americans suddenly realized just how small the world has become.

When a group of investors, bankers and currency speculators lost confidence in Thailand's ability to cope with its rising trade deficit and pay off its growing international debt, the value of the Thai currency plunged.

And the shock wave was felt around the world.

The devaluation set off a financial panic in Southeast Asia, and the Dow Jones industrial average tumbled 550 points, the market's largest single-day loss since the Black Monday crash of 1987.

Suddenly everyone who had a 401K retirement account or had invested in mutual funds was concerned about the economy on the other side of the globe. Southeast Asia was not only the hot topic on Wall Street, it was discussed over the dinner table and at work.

Just weeks after the stock market plunge, Furman held a press conference to announce that it would host the sixth annual U.S. Ambassadors Tour, an event organized by the US-ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Business Council in Washington, D.C. The tour would bring the American ambassadors and senior U.S. officials from nine Southeast Asian nations to the university for a day of workshops and conferences to discuss trade, investments and market conditions in the region.

Greenville would be the smallest city to host the event since the Ambassadors Tour began in 1992. It would also be the first time the tour had visited the Carolinas. Other host cities have included Portland, Chicago, Detroit, Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Dallas and Philadelphia. Before coming to Greenville, the tour would make stops in Phoenix and Kansas City before moving on to Fairfax, Va., and New York.

CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

During the months leading up to the conference, the situation in Asia worsened. Currency values remained low, and inflation rose. Suddenly a region that had enjoyed unprecedented growth during the past decade was mired in a deep recession. Even Japan, the economic engine of Asia, was not immune to the crisis.

The sinking economy touched off
Throughout the day, U.S. officials and business executives spoke candidly about the financial problems in Southeast Asia. Pausing between sessions: (l-r) Norman Carl, president, Society of International Business Fellows; Glen Race, U.S. ambassador to Brunei Darussalam; John Major, U.S. ambassador to Malaysia; Robert Oxnard, president emeritus, the Asia Society; Carroll Rushing, president, The Rushing Foundation; Wendy Chamberlain, U.S. ambassador to Laos; William Ith, U.S. ambassador to Thailand; Denis Harter, deputy chief of mission, U.S. Embassy, Hanoi.

riots and toppled a government in Indonesia, while causing political turmoil in other countries. Although the U.S. stock market rebounded from the October crash, more recent concerns over the world-wide repercussions of the Asian crisis and the political instability of Russia have precipitated an even more severe market decline.

As the 19-member delegation representing ASEAN nations (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) arrived in Greenville in early June, they expressed optimism — and spoke candidly about the region’s financial and political problems. “This has been an absolutely horrifying year,” said Robert B. Oxnard, president emeritus of the Asia Society and keynote speaker at the conference on June 8. “The word ‘crisis’ is aptly applied. It has been extremely difficult.”

But Oxnard said he was “cautiously optimistic” that many of the Asian nations may recover “within three to five years.” Although each Asian country is experiencing varying degrees of stress, Oxnard said that Indonesia is in the worst shape, while the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand are on the road to recovery.

The unstable economies are forcing government officials to institute economic and political reforms that will ultimately promote long-term stability and implement mechanisms to prevent such free falls
in the future. “History may show us 10 years from now that this was a time when a lot of big financial issues in Asia began to be resolved,” Oxnard said.

John Wolf, former ambassador to Malaysia and current director of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, agreed. “Out of this crisis there will be some real fundamental changes,” he said. “There will be a firmer foundation on which to build a new economy.”

Wolf said that Japan will likely lead the economic resurgence in the region. “It is going to be difficult for there to be any real significant recovery in the area without positive growth in Japan first,” he said.

For those companies that have holdings in Southeast Asia or are considering investing in the region, the ambassadors and economists at the ASEAN conference offered the following suggestions:

- Don’t divest in Southeast Asia. Maintain your interests there and learn more about the region. Don’t be scared away by the financial crisis.

- Remember that the recent turmoil in Asia does not diminish the long-term significance of the region. After all, it represents nearly 500 million people with a combined Gross Domestic Product of more than $600 billion.

- Keep an eye on the Japanese yen. A stronger yen could spark significant economic recovery in the region.

The ambassadors also encouraged the United States to hasten the Asian economic recovery by supporting loans to Asian countries.

**The Road to Greenville**

From 1994 to 1996, South Carolina’s exports to ASEAN countries jumped from $265 million to $329 million, making Southeast Asia one of the fastest growing export markets for the state. In addition, 81 Asian-based companies now operate in the state and employ a total of 15,000 people.

These factors, combined with Greenville’s pro-business climate and Furman’s excellent facilities, seemed to make the Upstate and ASEAN a perfect match. But it took some convincing to bring the tour to Furman.

“There was a little trepidation about going to Greenville and Furman because it was so small,” said Tina Valdecasas, coordinator of the U.S. Ambassadors Tour. “But it turned out to be the group’s favorite stop by far. The event was extremely well-organized by Furman and everyone was warm and inviting.”

More than 200 business executives and educators took part in the event, which included a tour of Hartness International and a GE turbine plant in Greenville.

Carroll Rushing, president of Shasta Enterprises and a member of the Furman Advisory Council, played a major role in bringing the Ambassadors Tour to the campus. A member of the Society of International Business Fellows (SIBF), he conceived of the idea after a conversation with Paul Cleveland, the former ambassador to Malaysia.

Early last year, Furman President David Shi and Rushing began discussing with Greenville business leaders the possibility of hosting the tour. Soon the Greater Greenville Chamber of Commerce, the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the South Carolina Department of Commerce collaborated on a proposal that would bring the tour to the Upstate. The Rushing Foundation, General Electric, Fluor Daniel, Hartness International, Crown Metro Specialty Products, Builder Marts of America, Chuck Volpe, Henderson Advertising, Bowater, Inc., Willis-Carroon, and English China Clays signed on as corporate sponsors.
Last summer, Shi and Rushing traveled to Washington, D.C., to make their pitch to Ernie Bower, executive director of the US-ASEAN Business Council and organizer of the Ambassadors Tour.

Rushing said the initial reaction to their proposal was one of skepticism. "They viewed us as textile people who were isolationist," he said. "But we were awarded the venue. In fact, we turned out to be the best host city on the tour. They told me that Furman and Greenville absolutely knocked their socks off."

Shi said, "I can assure you it wasn't easy to convince Ernie to bring the tour to Greenville — until he found out what a truly international region this is."

As the primary site, Furman took the lead in organizing the Ambassadors Tour. The ambassadors' entourage and many of the delegates arrived in time for a banquet on Saturday, June 6. On Sunday, some took a historic tour of downtown Greenville, while others chose to play a round of golf at the Furman Golf Course. That evening, David and Susan Shi hosted the ambassadors and other guests at a supper on the lawn at White Oaks.

In a plenary session on Monday morning, the ambassadors discussed the economic conditions and the possibilities for trade and investment in each ASEAN country. Also that morning, local executives met individually with the countries' senior commercial officers. Lunch in Hartness Pavilion was followed by a press conference, group sessions with the senior commercial officers, and a roundtable discussion about power generation and the environment. The day ended with a reception beside the Furman lake.

Shi called the Ambassadors Tour a "resounding success." In fact, he said that Bower has expressed interest in bringing a delegation of Asian political and economic leaders to the Upstate next year.

"Greenville and Furman can take justified pride in hosting such a distinguished and timely event," Shi said. "We were the smallest city to attract the tour, and ours was among the most successful ever."
“After more than two years of wide-ranging discussion and debate, we have drafted a bold new strategic plan that gives our university the vision, momentum and commitment to turn dreams into reality.”

President David E. Shi