Vernon Burton: A New Approach to the Old South  
by Terry Walters  
Historian Vernon Burton returns home to conduct a definitive study of the Old South.

How I Got This Way and Other Notes from the Hollywood Hills  
by Donald Todd  
From tour guide to the youngest Executive Producer in town, TV scriptwriter Don Todd catapults to the top of the Hollywood power structure.

The Woman as Writer and Reader  
Women writers must cope with special problems, according to five award-winning writers who spoke at Furman.

Winning Big for Alabama's Babies  
by Ann Green  
Alumna Ann Green describes how a small afternoon newspaper won the biggest prize of all for its coverage of the high infant death rate in Alabama.

The Research Puzzle  
Two Furman professors, Dr. James Edwards and Dr. David Rutledge, express their views on a controversial issue in higher education.

COVER: As he creates new works, Furman art professor and potter Bob Chance explores new ideas and techniques. For artists such as Chance, the investigation and discovery of the creative process provide the intellectual growth that more traditional research provides in other academic disciplines. See article about faculty research on page 26. Photo by David Crosby.
VERNON BURTON: A NEW APPROACH TO THE OLD SOUTH

BY TERRY WALTERS

"A diamond in the rough" is how the late history professor Winston Babb described young Vernon Burton in a letter of recommendation for the promising undergraduate. Indeed, Burton was about as "country" as they come when he enrolled at Furman University back in 1965. When he arrived on campus from his hometown of Ninety Six, S.C., he was the first member of his family to attend college, virtually the first to graduate from high school. He says, "I had hardly known anyone to go to college before." Despite excellent academic credentials (he was valedictorian of his high school class), his speech retained a number of revealing ruralisms.

Today that small-town boy is a much-honored scholar and author with a Pulitzer Prize nomination to his credit. He is a professor of history at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he has taught since 1974, winning numerous teaching awards (four in a single year). He holds a Ph.D. from Princeton University, as well as a Phi Beta Kappa key, and is the author of more than a score of scholarly articles and editor of several books. In 1985 he completed his first full book, In My Father's House Are Many Mansions: Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina. Highly acclaimed by reviewers, notably by the dean of Southern historians C. Vann Woodward in the New York Review of Books, the book was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize by the University of North Carolina Press. And just this fall Burton received the highest honor that can be bestowed on a professor at Illinois when he was named a University Scholar.

Given those accomplishments and the fact that Burton has lived most of his adult life outside the South, he remains to a remarkable degree the same young man from Ninety Six who first enrolled at Furman. Certainly there is more polish, and tweeds and buttondowns have replaced the strange attire that caused Professor Babb to write of him, "I never saw a more unsophisticated dresser." But the Southern accent is unmistakable and, at 41, he still exudes a boyish enthusiasm. He retains the seemingly inexhaustible curiosity that impelled him to take many more courses at Furman than he needed to graduate.

Although he is far from critical about the South—"my view alternates from its being the center of all evils to the best region of all"—Burton remains at heart a Southerner. How else do you explain someone who last year gave up invitations to speak at Stanford, Harvard and the University of California at Berkeley but did speak at religious emphasis week at small, predominantly black Claflin College in Orangeburg, S.C.? He says, "I call two places home—Ninety Six and Furman University."

When you ask Burton who his heroes are, he mentions his teachers and "people in local communities who make a commitment to what they believe in and act on it." He becomes more specific—"the people in Ninety Six." And foremost among these is Burton's mother, "for her independence and struggle."

Burton is devoted to his mother, who reared him alone after his father died when the boy was just seven. Left

In his study of Edgefield County, Burton discovered great disparities in personal wealth before the Civil War. Roselands Plantation, where he and daughter Beatrice stroll, belonged to one of the wealthy families.
with no money and no insurance, the proud Vera Burton refused to accept any government help, in part "so they could never take my son into the Army." Mrs. Burton had reason to be concerned: her husband had lost a leg while serving in the Marines before World War II and four of his brothers were killed in that war. So Mrs. Burton took over her husband's insurance route and—with help from Vernon's jobs delivering papers and sweeping up in a cotton mill—managed to support the two of them. (Later, as it turned out, Burton voluntarily went into the Army, by way of ROTC at Furman, and attained the rank of captain.)

Burton credits his mother with having given him his values and calls her "the wisest and kindest person I know." He points out that even though theirs was a female-headed home, the values she imparted were strongly patriarchal.

Family is Burton's top priority, and today that means his ("Northern, urban") wife, Georganne, and five daughters. Even his book was a family affair: "My children—Joanna, Maya, Morgan, Beatrice and Ali—helped by entering data into the computer, copying tombstone inscriptions, and reminding me of the really important things in life."

In writing his history of Edgefield, Burton took a new approach. He says, "Southern history used to be either the history of great white men or black history. What you need to do is write about both black and white and their interrelationships." So he turned to his home county in the critical years 1850-80 and studied it exhaustively.

He justified concentrating on just one county with a quotation from author Eudora Welty: "One place comprehended can make us understand other places better; extended it is sense of direction."

Burton chose Edgefield to comprehend not because it was home but for historical reasons. In many ways the county was typical of nineteenth century South Carolina.

Throughout the century, the ratio of blacks to whites paralleled that of the state as a whole and in other important statistics such as age, gender breakdown, death and birth rates, it typified rural South Carolina. Like most of the state, it was primarily cotton-farming, heavily Protestant, largely Baptist.

But Edgefield was more than typical—it carried to extremes much of what characterized the rest of the South. Describing the county after the Civil War, the Charleston News and Courier admitted its upcountry rival Edgefield had "harder riders, bolder hunters, more enterprise and masterly politicians," as well as "more dashing, brilliant, romantic figures, statesmen, orators, soldiers, adventurers, dare-devils, than any county of South Carolina, if not of any rural county in America."

Indeed, Edgefield was, Burton notes, "one of the most historically significant local communities in America."

As South Carolina was in the vanguard of the South in nullification, then in pro-slavery and pro-Southern arguments and later in Secession, so Edgefield led South Carolina. Edgefield gave the state 10 governors and many senators, including both the populist "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman and current senator and one-time Dixiecrat presidential candidate Strom Thurmond. The county also produced black leaders including Gordon Hamcock and Dr. Benjamin E. Mays.

And did Burton research Edgefield! Of course, he used the usual historical sources—newspapers, archives, oral history, and other narratives—and he selected from them to make the book lively and readable. But in addition, he catalogued every household head, family head and spouse and child in Edgefield for three decades. Just one census involved 9,877 cases with 47 variables. Using the wonderful new tool of scholarship, the computer, he developed 227 tables, showing average household size and makeup, farm size, distribution of slave ownership, occupations, distribution of wealth, color of spouses and on and on. (Fortunately for his readers, a wise editor pruned the number of tables in the published book to 40.) Woodward wrote of Burton's achievement, "For thoroughness and comprehensiveness it rivals, if it does not exceed, any historical investigation of an American community..."
Much of what all this research confirms is summed up in Burton's title. The quotation "In My Father's House Are Many Mansions" is from the Gospel of John, and the centrality of religion to the whole of Edgefield society, white and black, is a major theme. The title suggests unity in diversity, and Burton shows that rich and poor, slaves and free men shared many of the same values: a deep sense of honor, religious orthodoxy, intense local patriotism, and a strong feeling for family. The word father is prominent and Burton demonstrates that for all levels of society, Edgefield was patriarchal. Contrary to the view of many prominent social historians, not even slave society was matriarchal.

Burton reveals, in fact, that "despite the most difficult circumstances, the slave family in the South was typically a male-dominated nuclear family (father, mother, children).

Further, that family structure survived the Civil War.

He speculates that the myth of black matriarchy originated with abolitionist writers who depicted among the evils of slavery the female-headed home. Later, he says, whites unsympathetic to black equality turned this attack on slavery into an argument about black people's inability to function as full participants in a modern society. Further, many who studied post-Civil War blacks did so in towns where, because employment opportunities for black men were scant, there were in fact many female-headed homes. He writes, "If any divergence in family types is to be deduced, the line should be drawn not between the typical Afro-American family and the typical white family but between the town-dwelling black family and all the rest, black and white."

Although it did not win the Pulitzer, Burton's study of Edgefield has been favorably received. It went into a second hard-cover edition in 1987 and has sold well as a paperback. Two major historical associations have held sessions on the work. The book has focused attention on Burton as an expert on computer research in the field of history. He created the history computer laboratory at the University of Illinois, and he is currently at work under a $100,000 grant developing supercomputer programs that will enable other historians to manipulate massive sets of data. He has spoken about the exciting prospects for historical research before the American Association for the Advancement of Science and at other major conferences.

Burton was quoted in Business Week (March 23, 1987), predicting that supercomputers will enable historians not only to sift through far more data, but also to analyze textual materials in old documents. The possibilities are tremendous. In fact, he says it would now be possible to work out a record linkage program encompassing everybody in the United States who was ever recorded in a census. Such a program would enable historians to find out about family mobility, agricultural production and other activities.

Enthusiastic as Burton is about the future of computer research, he insists that he is a humanist, not a scientist. When he is talking about his narrative history projects, he becomes most animated. He recently edited the new edition of the autobiography of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, published by the University of Georgia Press in both hard cover and paperback last year, and he is in the midst of research on a second book about Edgefield. He'd like to do a book on the "black squint" of the laws in South Carolina, dealing with laws that served to disenfranchise blacks. He has signed a publishing contract for a nearly completed textbook biography of Ben Tillman and he wants someday to do a book on a fascinating murder case in Edgefield in 1849-50. And then there really ought to be a study of slavery, covering such aspects as the renting of slaves, showing how slavery was more flexible and mobile than most people realize.

With all his scholarly concerns, Burton insists on giving lots of time to his students—a priority he gained from his Furman professors. In class he can be a real showman. Nominating him for the Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, which he won in 1986, his department praised him as an innovative professor who takes a "multi-media approach...not only using film, music, transparencies, slides and guest speakers, but also staging classroom dramas, dressing as historical characters, calling and leading a square dance and preaching a hell-fire-and-
damnation sermon."
He also makes time to testify in Civil Rights cases. He says, "It is time-consuming, but I consider it community service or obligation." As a student of race relations and voting patterns, he is frequently asked to determine why a given law was passed, whether its intent was to discriminate against blacks. Among the cases he has worked on is McCoin vs. Lybrand, which went all the way to the Supreme Court. Burton says the Civil Rights cases show how relevant history can be. In fact, Tom McCoin, a black man from Edgefield, told him the court case came out of reading Burton's articles on Reconstruction.

Racism has troubled Burton since his youth. He says, "I grew up in a segregated society and culture, and as a Christian, I found that a real problem, trying to explain how Christians could view other Christians as not equal in the eyes of God." Today, while he deplores the racism that remains, he says the South has made tremendous progress toward real democracy and acceptance. It's the North now, he has found, where racism is more virulent.

When Burton speaks of his Furman days, it is in glowing terms. He says, "Without Furman University, there is no way I could have gone on as an academic. . . . It made the whole difference in my life. Furman provided a place to search for answers, time to think."

He remembers his teachers: "Babb reached out to me — found a scholarship so I could return my sophomore year . . . probably made me a history major . . . Sanders was the model of a good historian with a tremendous love of teaching . . . Newton Jones showed what research is all about . . . Leverette challenged me to think . . . Ed Jones took a serious look at the Vietnam experience . . . and Drs. Gilpatrick, Brewer and Walters, and David Smith, Price, Crapps . . . all fabulous. And Burton stays in touch with the Furman history faculty, particularly Professor William Leverette, who, he says, "challenged me to think."

Don Aiesi, who got me into intensive summer study programs at Harvard, Yale and Columbia. Oh, yes, Ernie Harrill who showed what it is to be a teacher and a concerned individual . . . and R.C. Blackwell . . . and L.D. Johnson, another big influence." As the names come tumbling out, you sense both Burton's genuine admiration for each professor and his concern not to hurt a single soul.

Burton enrolled at Furman intending to study for the ministry, and he took enough religion courses to minor in that field. His senior year, in fact, he won a Rockefeller Foundation Grant that would have enabled him to attend Union Seminary. He chose graduate study in history instead, after a professor persuaded him that it would be easier to switch into the ministry from graduate school than vice versa. Obviously, he never felt called to switch.

Still, there is something of the preacher about Burton, a great moral fervor. He says, "It is very important to have commitments and live by them." Unlike many Midwestern academics, he continues to be very active in his church.

This year Burton is on sabbatical, spending most of the time as a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. At the congressionally funded "think tank," he is hard at work on his book on the Civil War and Reconstruction. Like In My Father's House, it will be a blend of quantitative, computer-assisted research and more traditional, narrative history.

The many demands on Burton's time take him to Urbana-Champaign to oversee the computer project, up to Dartmouth or down to Orlando to speak on computers and history, back to Columbia, S.C., to testify in a vote-dilution case, home to Ninety Six. Whenever possible, Burton takes Georganne and the girls on his travels. They are seldom out of his thoughts or conversation, and he says, looking to the future, "I would always be happy if I could be with my family. The only thing that keeps me from being the happiest person in the world is being so far from my mother."
MAYS CROSSROADS

NEAR HERE AUG. 1, 1874

DR. BENJAMIN E. MAYS, M.D.

WAS BORN

EIGHTH CHILD OF PARENTS

WHO HAD BEEN SLAVES

ONE OF THE STATE'S MOST

DISTINGUISHED NATIVE SONS

ONE OF THE GREAT FORCES FOR

CIVIL RIGHTS NOT ONLY IN THIS

COUNTRY BUT AROUND THE WORLD...

DEAN SCHOOL OF RELIGION

HOWARD UNIVERSITY

1934 — 40

PRESIDENT MOREHOUSE COLLEGE

1940 — 53

PRESIDENT EMERITUS 1957 —

PRESIDENT

ATLANTA BOARD OF EDUCATION

1959 — 64

MINISTER AUTHOR ORATOR

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

SAID OF DR. MAYS: HE WAS MY

SPIRITUAL MENTOR AND INTELLEC-

TUAL FATHER

DEDICATED 1959

BY ACTION OF S.C. GENERAL

ASSAMBLEY
I. CHINESE TOURISTS MEET THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES

THE SCENE: The driveway of the Beverly Hillbillies' mansion which is not, in fact, in Beverly Hills but in Bel Air; there's your first lesson in TV. Fourteen Chinese tourists are lost in the crannies of the Free World's toniest neighborhood, and I'm to blame.

I am a tour guide. Starline Tours, Tours of the Movie Stars' Homes: "On your right is Cary Grant's home . . . " No, it's not. "Keep your eyes peeled—you may see Paul Newman . . . " No, you won't. Not that the whole tour is a sham—Lucille Ball's house, Jimmy Stewart's . . . I could take you there even now. If you paid me ten bucks. That's what it costs to ride my van in 1983. I give as many as five two-hour tours each dry summer day, cruising glassy-eyed travelers through L.A.'s bumper-to-bumper babbling non-stop—"Who can tell me when Jack Benny died?!"—to take your mind off the heat.

Third trip of the day, and in my mirror 14 Oriental faces beam, a package tour. I pull away from Grauman's Chinese Theatre—Mann's, now, movie tickets seven bucks—famed for its fossil record of dead people's feet, and I'm two blocks gone down the Walk of Fame and chattering my way along the Sunset Strip before it clicks why my tourists are all smiling mutely at me like deacons of the Unification Church: they don't speak English. Not one of them, not a word. My tour is not closed-captioned, what are they doing on my bus? Maybe they think they're at Disneyland. I wish they were.

I'm whizzing past stars' homes and wondering, who do they know about in China? Besides Richard Nixon. What TV shows do they watch? "The Jeffersons?!" "ALF?"

"Dallas," Of course. Once I'm hip to this, I find homes for every star, every guest star, every extra that's ever been on that show, until the cast of "Dallas" owns half of Beverly Hills. Heck, I give Larry Hagman three houses on one street alone.

But even this fun wears thin. Two children get sick in the back seat and I know that an hour later they'll be sick again so I call it a day. It's not worth the ten bucks I rake in per tour (plus any cash inspired by my "Tip Me" sign, which, my mistake, is in English) so I turn around in the first wide drive-way—the Beverly Hillbillies' house.

My error is in coming to a full stop. The back door slides open and I hear two Cantonese syllables which must mean, "Let's live here," because all 14

Illustrations by Jack Vaughn
tourists pour from the van like—well, like black gold. . . Texas tea. They fan out and dot the landscape in all directions. I call in reinforcements. It takes two Bel Air patrolmen and me one hour to corral the foreigners with stupid shouts of, "You come! Come back in van, you!" Why do Americans think that people who speak no English are bound to respond to bad English? The patrolmen write me a citation for a violation I know they made up on the spot.

When I get back to the tour station, there are only 12 Chinese tourists in my van.

I don't want to be a tour guide, I want to be a writer.

After work, I go home and I write.

THE SCENE: The Hollywood offices of Bozo the Clown. I am Assistant to the World's Most Famous Clown, who at this moment is out doing whatever old clowns do with their days, creating mirth or hustling change or something, while on the home front we celebrate the magenta-haired, chain-smoking Office Manager's birthday, her 59th she says but she is a lying witch from Hell.

She's also diabetic. Too much sugary food will send her into a coma.

And we have bought her the biggest chocolate cake in Los Angeles. Happy Birthday. Somewhere into her third slice of cake, her cheesy little mind bends and she hears us laugh. Bozo's motto is, after all, "Just keep laughin'!" but this woman thinks it's "Just keep laughin' at her," and in a paranoid frenzy she attacks me with the cake knife.

When I die, I don't want it to be in a shrine to the World's Most Famous Clown. Luckily, an alert sales V.P. grabs the harpy from behind and saves me that ignominy, and we wrestle the madwoman into her office, bolt her there, and wait for her to calm down. No need to involve the authorities. That's the beauty of the Hollywood family—we take care of our own.

After work, I go home and I write.

THE SCENE: Cannon Films, playground of Golan and Globus, the Go-Go Boys, the Bad News Jews, purveyors of family fare like Death Wish and Breakin' and Bo Derek's Bolero. I am Publicity Coordinator, Joe White-collar, and my office is jammed with co-workers wishing me Happy First Anniversary. Only it's not my First Anniversary, nowhere near it.

I open a huge card, signed by everyone on all three floors of this company, people I don't know and who don't know me. And not just signed, but inscribed with personal yet generic well-wishes like the high school yearbook you passed around homeroom. What gives? My closest co-worker catches my eye and clues me in with a soft nod toward our boss, Patricia. Patricia's been up to some evil again.

Patricia, the self-acknowledged Most Powerful Woman in Hollywood (by now you realize that this town wears hyperbole like a sequined gown; rather, like the World's Most-Sequined Gown), is young and beautiful and despised by all. Four weeks earlier, wags in the art department printed up a joke photograph of her without a mouth. That night, she woke up gagging and had to call the paramedics. Some artists, fearing for their souls, destroyed the photo. Others thought they'd just needed a bigger print.

This morning, someone penned, in tiny letters on the elevator door, "Patricia is a bitch." Axiomatic though that is, Patricia is obsessed with finding the culprit and has manufactured this anniversary ruse, circulated a card and made every employee to sign it. Why? For handwriting samples.

And she's told people that it was my idea. So my office is full of grim colleagues forced to attend a fake party in honor of a traitor.

I blow out my candles.

After work, I go home and I write.

THE SCENE: The Culver Studios, birthplace of Gone With the Wind and Citizen Kane. Six years after leaving Furman, and two-and-a-half years after selling my first script to Twilight Zone, I have created my own CBS television
series. At 27, I am the youngest Executive Producer in town.

My boss is Grant Tinker, my director is Jay Sandrich, and my star is Dick Van Dyke—an All-Star team, and I'm along for the ride, catapulted by association to the head table. The phone rings and the town's biggest agents tell me that the town's biggest clients want to work for me. I have a private bathroom. I have a private parking spot, a private line, I haven't paid for lunch in months. Today I've written a script, rewritten a script, developed two stories, looked at tapes, cast actors, made set changes, edited a show, chosen music styles, type styles, hair styles . . .

My two screenplays are about to become movies.

I am doing exactly what I wanted to do, I am writing for a living and doing it in the Big Leagues.

Tonight I work until seven. After work I go home.

And I write.

II: "HECK, I CAN DO THAT."

No, you can't.

You can't write a TV show or a movie because you don't know how.

I was exiting a library when a young man approached me and said, "I bet you'd like a better job." He handed me a leaflet from a career-counseling agency.

I said, "No thank you, I already have the best job in the world."

He said, "What do you do?"

I said, "I write for TV."

He said, "Really? Can you get me a job?"

Which is to say, I know I have a great job and have no reason to complain. That said, here are some complaints.

As I write this, I and my writer-brethren are on strike, and while we walk the picket lines we hear this from passing motorists: "Try a real job!"

This is in the category of, "Heck, I can do that." Because a good TV show looks like the actors made it up themselves, and a bad one looks like anyone could write it. You see, nobody tells a cameraman that they could do his job just fine because nobody knows how the hell to do it, but, as screenwriter William Goldman says, everybody knows the alphabet.

Well. What I do is only occasionally, if ever, art, but it is every day a skill, and I now value my craft as much as I value a mechanic's or an engineer's or a lawyer's (well, okay, more than a lawyer's). I may not always be proud of what I do, but I'm awfully proud that I can do it because it is hard. No—it is impossible. If you see something good sneak through you'd better savor it, you'd better erect a monument to it because that might not happen again in your lifetime.

Passion, writes David Mamet, knows more than Art. But when the cameras roll, Passion and Art hang out near the bagel tray while Skill gets the job done. Because it must get done; television is, as they say, a hungry mouth, and if it's not fed a new show it's just as happy to swallow a fresh producer and spit his bones at the feet of the thousands of others waiting in line.

Performance Anxiety. Everyone gets it, you get it, but do you get it 24 hours a day, every day of your career? Even when it's full, the hungry mouth makes smack noises like a sleeping dog to let us know the dinner bell is about to ring, and when the bell tolls for me I wonder: can I cough it up just one more time? There's impossibly little room at this trough of ours, and every single writer in town is certain that every day there is his last—the good ones know they're on the edge of running dry forever, and the bad ones are just waiting to be found out.

We didn't choose our career, it chose us. Like pro football players trying to squeeze one more season from a wasted knee are the Hollywood writers who take it up the middle with splintered talent and shattered spirit and hit the line one more time, one more time. As Warren Zevon sings, " . . . Heaven help the one who leaves."

Don't get me wrong, nobody here's a martyr; we get paid big piles of cash, small fortunes, to do what we do. I'm just saying that nobody in his right mind would do it for a penny less.
III. SO HOW COME TV'S SO BAD?

Because of you. Stop watching it. I'm serious. Turn the damn thing off, use the remote control if you need to, and read a book or play with your kid or something. If enough of you do that—and, yes, I mean a lot of you—by the time you turn the box on again, you'll see a golden age of TV, you have my word on it. TV's a business. That's the way business works.

If this step is too painful for you, if you'd rather curse the darkness, at least remember this:

It's free.

IV. 2 BDR W/VU

From beside the pool of my Laurel Canyon home I can look across the hills and see the Hollywood sign.

From the porch of a crack house in South-Central L.A. a gang kid can also see the Hollywood sign.

In fact, he has a better view of it than I do.

That means something, and I'm afraid that if I think hard I'll figure out what.

POSTSCRIPT

After graduating from Furman in 1981, Don Todd moved to Hollywood with his wife and former Furman classmate Kris McDermott. He wrote scripts for three and a half years, submitting them to agents and producers, until he was hired to write several episodes of "The Twilight Zone." He worked as story editor of "Misfits of Science" and "Alf" before beginning work on "The Van Dyke Show."

On August 30, 1988, one year and four months after beginning work on "The Van Dyke Show," and three weeks before shooting the first episode, Dick Van Dyke and his agent have me fired because I'm too young. I inform my staff, clean out my office and go home.

And I write.
A group of award-winning women writers gathered at Furman last spring to discuss issues of special interest to women.

College students and professors, high school students and teachers, avid readers young and old—approximately 500 of them gathered in Daniel Recital Hall last March 24-26 from as near as the Furman dormitories and from as far away as Virginia and middle Georgia. The occasion was a symposium, The Woman as Writer and Reader.

Furman had often hosted individual writers, but had never assembled a group of significant literary figures to interact with each other. For a number of years several people had been eager to have Furman sponsor such a gathering. When funds finally became available, it seemed appropriate to focus on women writers since much of the serious work being published today is written by women, some from this region. In addition, the EMRYS Foundation of Greenville was sponsoring a month-long celebration of women in the arts, and Furman wanted to make a contribution.

Josephine Humphreys, whose first novel, *Dreams of Sleep*, won the Ernest Hemingway Award and second novel, *Rich in Love*, has been widely acclaimed, opened the symposium to a packed auditorium on Thursday night, March 24. Friday morning's activities included a reading by Louise Shivers, author of *Here to Get My Baby Out of Jail*, which was named best first novel of 1983 by USA Today. Shivers was followed by Furman English Professor Willard Pate, one of the organizers of the conference, who read Sally Fitzgerald's paper, "The Level Gaze of the Artist." Fitzgerald, editor of O'Connor's collected works and letters and biographer of the late author, was to have attended the symposium, but was detained in Italy for personal reasons.

Friday afternoon began with a talk by Barbara Hardy, professor of English at Birkbeck College of the University of London. Hardy, author of numerous scholarly works about Dickens, George Eliot, and Virginia Woolf, spoke about her own reactions to the works of fiction written by the other participants. American Book Award-winning Ellen Gilchrist, author of *Victory Over Japan*, *In the Land of Dreamy Dreams*, and *Drunk with Love*, closed Friday's activities with a reading that evening. Then Gloria Naylor, also an American Book Award-winner for *The Women of Brewster Place*, read from her recently published *Mama Day* on Saturday morning.

Two panel discussions gave the participating writers an opportunity to exchange ideas with each other and their readers in public. The first panel, moderated by Pate on Friday afternoon, focused on the question, "Do You Think of Yourself as a Woman Writer?" The second, moderated by Dr. Ann Sharp, another organizer of the symposium and a member of Furman's English faculty, addressed the issue of "The Place of Women Writers in the Literary Tradition."

By all accounts, the symposium was a major success. One member of the audience commented, "I could hardly believe the good fortune of having this in Greenville. The person sitting next to me had driven from Charlotte for the day. This exposure is so valuable for 'would-be' writers...and pure heaven for readers."

Another wrote, "Thanks for a stimulating symposium! Encore!"

Edited versions of the two panel discussions appear in the following pages.
DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS A WOMAN WRITER?

Pate: We would like first to have all four of you entertain the question "Do you think of yourself as a woman writer?" Then we will ask for supplemental questions from the audience.

Shivers: Well, I don't know how to answer that question but maybe as we talk, more will come to me. I really do try to write stories. I am a woman and I'm, at this point in my life, very happy about being a woman. So that's the way it's going to come out, but I really don't think about it that much.

Gilchrist: I wrote an answer down but I wouldn't have had to because Louise just said what I'm thinking. That doesn't mean that it isn't a good title for a panel discussion, but I decided that if I do this I have to tell you exactly what I think whether I am popular with you or not. Because like all well-raised children, I was raised to try to get people to like me. But I don't think of myself as a woman when I write because I think of myself—I wrote this down—"As part of the physical universe which includes the reaches of the stars and the sub-atomic particles." I think it's a terrible mistake for a writer to start limiting their conception of themselves.

But Louise just said exactly the same thing much more simply and probably more beautifully.

Naylor: This is a question that has only been asked of writers in the last 20 years or maybe even 15 years. I cannot imagine anyone having said to Richard Wright, "What is it like to be a black, male writer?" or to John Irving, "Tell me, how is it to be male and a writer?" Because we assume naturally that anything that is indeed male, writes. So, therefore, in texts you will have the writer, he uses the pen and uses metaphor. That's a problem that does not exist with the people on this panel. It exists with the way we perceive things in this society. If we make the assumption that there is a norm, and if that norm is indeed male or if that norm is indeed white, upper middle-class male, then anything that's not in that norm has to explain their existence and explain what they are doing.

The whole process of writing, folks—before the word processor—took a piece of paper and a pencil, and it took a desire to have something to say. From Homer on, every writer has articulated through their own particular experience. Shakespeare's Egyptians, his Venetians, his Caribbeans all spoke like Elizabethan English people. Because that was what Shakespeare was. But now, lo and behold, Alice Walker will come along and she will articulate through her experience and will be asked to explain, "Why did you write from that perspective?" You know it is like saying, "Why do you breathe, Gloria?" "Why do you breathe, Josephine?" And I don't take exception to it; I am not insulted by it. But I am a bit put out by the closed-mindedness of our society that has not accepted the reality that women have been here writing about their experiences at the same time men have been writing. And that is what we have to change.

Humphreys: I never considered this question at all while I was writing my first book. But suddenly after publishing and talking to people and having people react to my work, I realized it is a question. At first it annoyed me every time it came up. I didn't want to talk about being a woman writer, and I didn't like the distinction made between a woman's book and a man's book. However, in an insidious kind of way all of that thinking has made me think the opposite. There are some things in my own personal life right now—a lot of emotional turmoil that I think is related to being a woman, and in particular with children—that affects my writing a lot. So I hesitate to say that I'm not affected by the female experience and that it doesn't affect my writing.
In a way, though, writing affects my femininity more than femininity affects my writing. It’s sort of an opposite thing for me. Writing has changed my life in so many ways, and that’s one of them. It seems to be constantly modifying my perceptions of myself and of what I am doing.

**Questioner:** I’m curious to know how you are able to write, as well as cope with the many demands in women’s lives — children, family, husbands, dogs.

**Humphreys:** This is part of my whole problem now. When I began writing I handled the problem by becoming schizophrenic and dividing my life completely down the middle. Doing children half my time and writing the other half. Well, children and family, but everything else disappeared out of my life, including friends. And that is the worst loss. Everything else too—all my contact with community. At the time I was clearly glad to be rid of it. But this is 10 years down that road now, and I find that the lack of friends and the lack of contact with the human community is killing. It really is very, very difficult to maintain over that long period of time. And though I give some thought and effort to restoring myself in that respect, I have a feeling that I will cut back even further, so that I’m eventually going to cut back on the things that are crucial and important to me and that I love. So it’s frightening to me that there seems to be, to me anyway, almost a danger in writing.

**Naylor:** I understand what Josephine is saying. That’s one of the reasons I teach. Because it forces me to leave my home and to reach out to people and listen to what they are saying and communicate. Because as a writer you are rewarded for staying inside, for becoming a recluse. That’s one of the ironies of the whole process. The more you hold yourself off from the world, the better you’re able to re-create the world that you’ve sort of shut off. Unlike the women on my left and right, I don’t have to worry about the nuclear family. There was a husband once, but I got rid of him, and so there are no small children who are dependent upon me. So there’s even a greater danger that there’ll be no one demanding my time outside of me. And you don’t want that. You want to be a whole human being if you possibly can, but it becomes a fight.

**Gilchrist:** I’ll tell you what I was thinking about when Gloria was saying that. My first book of fiction was supposed to be published the same month that my first grandchild was being born in New Orleans. I’ve always thought what a lucky and fortunate and star-created situation that was for me because it saved me. I remember I called Eudora Welty sometime in August, and she said something about I know you’re excited about your book, and I said I am. And then I said, “Eudora, the baby’s going to be born exactly the same time, and I don’t know which one to be more excited about.” And she said, “Oh, Ellen, they’re not in competition.” Oh, wasn’t that wonderful? And they aren’t; and I thought about it a million times. But they are. Since I am an obsessive person, I have to do what Josephine used to do—I have to go from obsession to obsession, but I’ve been doing it for 53 years, and I’m real comfortable with that.

**Shivers:** Even though my children were late teenagers by the time I started writing, I still have almost the same problem I think Jo was talking about. We have a very close family and even though they’re now grown people with husbands and wives and I have a grandchild, they’re constant, every day problems. I mean, they still are your children. I was so intense about finally getting the chance to be a writer and not wanting to miss the chance to tell these stories that I finally found out I could tell, and at the same time wanting to keep the family. That’s all—I don’t do anything else. I’m either writing or with the family, and there are some re-

"Nobody ever told me that women were supposed to take a backseat to anybody."

Ellen Gilchrist
relationships and friendships that hurt to give up, but you do have to give up some things if you are a writer. That's for sure, and I've been there. It's worth it.

**Gilchrist:** I've learned a wonderful thing from having that happen to me, though. I've learned what it is when a man becomes obsessive about his work. I know now he doesn't dislike me, he's not tired of me; he's excited about something he's doing, he's moving toward a goal that he has created for himself, real or imaginary. And not only a man. I say men because I have sons, and my sons are at the age where they're beginning to really fulfill their mature lives, and I see them get an idea in their head and start going toward it, and nobody else is going to exist for them for weeks or months. And it's wonderful to know that that's okay. They're going to come out the other end and say, "Where are my friends? Where are my children? Where's my mother?"

**Questioner:** Mrs. Shivers, it seems to me that both Roxy and Georgianna, whom you shared with us in your reading this morning, seem to be very aware of their roles in society as far as being mothers and taking care of their houses. You mentioned that you married very early and that you didn't start writing until you were about 40, and I wondered if their experiences and your experience are parallel, if you're trying to send a message about a woman's place in society through Roxy and Georgianna, and the difference now from then.

**Shivers:** I probably am. Neither one of them really had much choice. Georgianna certainly, in the late eighteenth hundreds, didn't have any choice. There were no libraries and bookmobiles. There she was in this little town and she was raised to-you know, you're a wife and a mother and you cook meals and take care of the men and you are. That's your life. And then Roxy came on in 1930 and did the same thing. Well, I was raised the same way. I'm sure most of y'all were raised that way. The woman steps back. You give the man the biggest piece of meat and you wait until he eats. Yes, I am still working out something in myself about that. I see it in my daughters, though they've already gone far from it. I think I started giving them a message pretty strong, "Get out there and go." But I still have some problems with myself, and, of course, I'm writing through those problems.

**Gilchrist:** Nobody ever told me that women were supposed to take a backseat to anybody. I just didn't ever perceive it as being between men and women. You went out there and fought with your brothers for whatever you wanted—this is the kind of stuff I say that makes me unpopular. I saw being the only girl in the family as a position where I was the only one who could run to my mother and grab hold and hide behind her and say, "He hit me! He hit me!" I always started it!

**Questioner:** This question is directed to Mrs. Shivers. I heard you say at another workshop that the tender trap for most Southern girls was being daddy's little girl or something to that effect. That it was a trap that was very difficult to get out of.

**Shivers:** It was for me. I did have this wonderful father, and he was just very tender and sweet. And then I had all these brothers. It helped me stay a victim a lot longer. Because they were protective, I was really safe. I had Daddy and the boys. And that's not all bad. My Daddy was a sweet thing, and I do think of him as sweet. I didn't start writing until after my father died. And that's part of the thing that made me go on to do it, I'm sure. One of the things that feels so good about all this is I know how proud he would be that I finally did it. But I also know now that he would have been proud if I had gone ahead and done it a long time before I did.

You know, I like men and I never had any big awe about men. I was surrounded by them all the time, not only the ones at home but all the boys who worked at the funeral home, so it wasn't any great mysterious thing. But somewhere in there I had just gotten that message from the time I was born: "Keep quiet and be sweet and they'll love you better." I have a part in the new novel I just finished where I say, "Maybe that kind of compassion and all this Southern, loving way is just another way to say fear." Maybe it was
just another word for fear. So I’m still trying to figure all this out.

Gilchrist: It’s another word for Oedipus complex, if you say all that.

Now that is amazing. All that a female child can do from the time she sits up and walks and talks is repeat that relationship that she had with her daddy. And all that a male child can do is repeat the one he had with his mama. And it’s not bad. It’s just how the human mind works, but you can never finish sounding the mysteries of the Oedipus complex.

Humphreys: I had no brothers at all and no boys my own age to talk to and went to a girls’ school. So my father was the only male in my life. And though I couldn’t wait until he died to publish, he wishes that I had.

The messages to me when I was growing up were you need not compete with men, and women can do anything that men can do. And you must get all A’s in school and you must be the best that you possibly can, but never let anyone know how smart you are. Especially don’t let men know. And never . . . let’s see, the things that you could do that might ruin your life included number one, getting pregnant, number two, going on the stage, number three, publishing something. And those were explicit rules.

Pate: This is very Southern.

Naylor: Yeh, very Southern. Although my folks are from Mississippi and I was conceived in Mississippi and they moved to New York a month before I was born, I grew up in somewhat of a Southern home. But not quite as Southern as what I am hearing.

I’m the oldest of three girls. My dad wanted sons and my mother told us that he told her when I first came, “Okay, okay, I’ll give you that one, but I want sons.” And then the middle sister came and the baby sister. My mother said, “Then I closed up shop.” So he reconciled himself to the fact that he was going to be raising females. And that was good for us because we were taught by a father that you can do anything you want to do. He was so afraid that we would have to become dependent upon men that we learned how to change tires. I learned how to unchoking my car, that sort of thing. And also just to go out and do what I had to do in the world. But, somehow you knew that after you did all that, you did get married. Become very independent so in case he leaves you, you can take care of yourself. There was supposed to be a he who would be there. That’s the kind of home it was.

But as far as my writing is concerned, I never had any worry about my parents’ having to be senile or dead before I could say the things I’ve said. They’ve been quite proud of the fact that I do write. I think a lot of that comes from their background. They didn’t have the privilege of going on to college or even being allowed to use the public libraries where they were.

Questioner: If you had advice to give to a person who wants to write, what would you tell them?

Humphreys: If you are 20, I would tell you to read as much as you possibly can. That would be the first thing to do. If you are 30, I would tell you to work as hard at writing as you possibly can. And I think those are two things that all writers should do, all beginning writers and all practicing writers also.

Hard work is the secret to me and it is the way that you get to page 300, which is always the crucial thing. You just have to keep at it.

Shivers: I would say learn to respect yourself, and respect that desire to do it. Read and write, and just write about things that you are passionate about. And do it. It really comes down to being that simple. The day came when I said to myself, if I am going to do it I’ve got to do it and not keep talking about it.

Naylor: I have found that if you have to tell a person to read, they’re normally not a writer by inclination, because all writers begin as voracious readers and then somehow just spring off from that. You also want to articulate your own story. So the reading is just natural, more than even desire—an almost unquenchable passion for you. You just absorb language.

To reiterate, it’s hard work. And you have to understand the loneliness of it. We have this Hollywood conception about what it means to write, but it takes tremendous hours and not just hours where you are sitting around, but hours of intense concentration and self-examination. That’s work. But if you have a story you feel is worth telling, you don’t mind that sacrifice of friends, of community, of time and even having it be all wrong sometimes. And then you have to have the courage to start over and to keep believing that somehow that story is in you.

Pate: This would be something that would be true for a man or a woman.

Naylor: Exactly. That’s the whole thing about this panel. Ninety-nine and forty-four one-hundredths of the process is indeed not only genderless and faceless, it’s even humanless at times. It’s about dredging up things that are down there in the human spirit, in the gut. Yes it’s words, it’s language, which is the province of everyone. It just becomes problematic when you begin to filter it through thousands of other perceptions or assumptions.

Questioner: When you want to write about something that involves people you know, is it a problem? Do you say, “I am going to do it; I don’t care who’s offended!” How much of that kind of editing do you do as you write?

Naylor: It’s really censorship you are talking about.

Questioner: Yes, censorship. Self-censorship.

Naylor: What will happen is that I will often see the character start to evolve and take on a life of his or her own. I might catch glimpses of people in my family, perhaps, or of friends in that character, and then I just simply let it go. Because if you step in and say, “Oh, God, this is my mother. This is a story she told me when she was 20. She’ll kill me. She’ll cut me out of her will. She’ll cancel her insurance policy.” If you do, if you pull yourself in and you say let me chop this off, then the writing becomes flat. And I think psychologically something happens because you know that you cheated. After that it’s like playing dominoes, everything will fall flat.

It takes a lot of courage and I think understanding from the people around

_“If you have a story you feel is worth telling, you don’t mind that sacrifice of friends, of community, of time and even having it be all wrong sometimes.”_ Gloria Naylor

Writing has nothing to do with gender or race most of the time, says Gloria Naylor, who has published three novels.
us. You can only write from what you know. And things you've imagined and things you wish to meet. And they'll have to understand that it's not them. Perhaps it may be just little bits of them. And if it is them, I think it's a compliment. You know what we have told you about how hard it is to write—you spend that much time talking about your mother. She should be glad.

**Humphreys:** Also, the thing you are writing about tends to change as you write and to become less a true event or a true person and more your own creation or own mixture of the two. In the end it's something new.

**Questioner:** I have heard different writers refer to a character they had created taking on a life of its own, speaking to them. If you've had such experiences, could you share them with us?

**Humphreys:** I used to hear people say that, and I thought it was baloney. That's before I was writing. And now I get that same feeling. I think what happens is that when I am writing, part of my rational brain shuts down. That's almost necessary in writing and is what we call inspiration. It is not really that at all, but it is something coming from part of the brain that we are not always in control of or in good touch with. And so it seems as if the book is writing itself or your character is taking over. Obviously that doesn't happen; it's obviously the creation of your imagination, but you may not know exactly how it's working.

**Gilchrist:** It's like, "Who is driving this car? Who's skiing down this hill?" You are not really thinking about it. It may not be as difficult to write a book as we would like to think. Once you get past all the inhibitions and fears and problems and questions—you just write. It feels like memory, which means you thought it up very fast and you are just remembering the parts.

**Questioner:** As an aspiring writer, I wonder when do you make the differentiation between talent or lack of talent? Is there a certain number of rejection slips that tell you that?

**Naylor:** That should be the least of your concerns. That, or even reviews. If you are literate, you have a talent for putting words on paper. Though it becomes a bit more than that—things we have been telling you about—dedication, willingness to hang in there, the passion for language itself. If anything, that is what separates the girls from the women.

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**THE PLACE OF WOMEN WRITERS IN THE LITERARY TRADITION**

**Sharp:** Today, we'd like to talk about the place of the woman writer in the literary tradition. In recent years, there has been a growing concern about past failures to include women writers in standard collections like the *Norton Anthology*. And there has been an effort to have more women included.

Would you tell us what women writers you read when you were growing up?

**Gilchrist:** I'll start with Pearl Buck who I think won the Nobel.

And Edna St. Vincent Millay, wonderful, wonderful sonnets which I think will someday be revived. She's represented in anthologies, but not well represented.

I think that at least half the books I read must have been by women. I was a voracious reader and I naturally moved towards books by women. Because I had so little experience with the world to bring to the things I was reading, at least a woman's sensibility would be speaking to me. My brother was in the other room, and, you know, we had the sexist country at our house. He was over there reading the Hardy Boys and I was reading Nancy Drew. We thought that was okay.

**Humphreys:** I actually read a lot of boys' books when I was young. I read the Hardy boys and not Nancy Drew. I just didn't have Nancy Drew. I think that was the only reason. But I also read every single Louisa May Alcott book, and those books were extremely important to me. It's about a family of girls, which is what I lived in. And the oldest girl, who was a writer, was named Jo.

**Shivers:** I think it's terribly unfair that...
you actually got to be named Jo.

Humphreys: I used to do the things that she did. She would take apples up into the garret and write. I didn't like apples but I took them up there, in an attic where no one had been for hundreds of years. It was 93 degrees up there and I wrote. It was an amazing influence on my life to do that. I think if a child reads something with a character with his name, it's really powerful. It would be nice if we could find one for everyone else.

Hardy: You were lucky because that's one of these androgynous names.

Humphreys: Oh, yes. I realized that also from an early age. I was sort of a tomboy. I thought my parents wanted a boy rather than a girl. I didn't have any brothers, but it took me a while to realize that it was okay to be a girl. I read Pearl Buck at a later age and Edna St. Vincent Millay as well. But I didn't really notice which books were written by women and which were by men.

Gilchrist: It never occurred to me. The only reason I wanted to know the names of authors was so I could get the rest of their books. I had no curiosity whatsoever about the author.

Hardy: I also read a lot of boys' books and boys' magazines, but I also read an awful lot of tripe, or trash. I had a wonderful aunt who was the least academic of her family, and she once said when I picked up one of her women's magazines, "Well, I'll say this for Barbara, she'll read anything." She was very pleased.

Shivers: Other than Louisa May Alcott—at least I almost got Louisa—my favorite book was The Secret Garden. I still love it so much.

And also around the house there was a copy of Pride and Prejudice, which my mother had left over from her days at Meredith College. I read it over and over and over. I loved it; Darcy was so wonderful. But I always read whatever, too. Just whatever was there. In fact, my first learning about sex was from my brother's Boy Scout manual.

One other thing that was a big, big influence on me. I remember exactly the moment when a teacher came in and read "Patterns" by Amy Lowell.

Humphreys: I thought they were British.

Gilchrist: I could never read Anne of Green Gables or any woman who would allow herself to be a victim in literature, or really even the Alcott books. They would begin to bore me. I fought for a living. I fought with my brothers for excitement and fun. It was my greatest pleasure in life. And I could not understand anyone being in a position where they couldn't fight. So I didn't understand why they didn't. Or else I would be empathizing so much. To this day in a film if someone is going to be struck or hit I'll leave the theatre. I have never been able to see the middle part of Fannie and Alexander when that child was beaten. I literally can't face it.

Questioner: It seems that not much writing by women is included in the established canon. Just a little sprinkling here and there. Would you like to voice an opinion about why?

Hardy: Publishers are doing a lot about it. There are good presses, and women's presses have been introducing a lot of new stuff. Feminist critics have been attacking the exclusiveness of the great tradition, and I would have thought things were moving.

Humphreys: I think in the last 10 years or so there has been a renewed interest in some of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century women writers. But it is still sort of grudging. I mean it's for women. These women writers are being dug up for women to read. It's not like they're being restored.
The reason I think that women writers are not part of the grand tradition and graduate school work is that graduate school teachers don't like to give much value to domestic fiction, to stories of the family. Immediately there is a reaction against that subject matter. And they won't come out and say so; they use the term "limited palette."

**Questioner:** Don't you feel that women will read what are considered to be male books on male topics while men will not read about domestic issues? I will read *Sports Illustrated* or *The Right Stuff* or some football book my husband has, but he would never turn around and read my book.

**Gilchrist:** You've just got this bigger palette.

**Hardy:** It's also because women's liberation has outstripped men's liberation.

**Questioner:** I hate to be the devil's advocate here, but my husband just read *Hot Flashes* and loved it.

**Gilchrist:** Well married!

*Before her reading, Louise Shivers consults student host Beth Lanning and Dr. Willard Pate about the day's events.*

We have got to stop a minute here, because it is one thing to talk about fiction, but I am more interested in the poets of the past. I have always felt like women poets—women poets in America—are well represented in anthologies. They dominate to some extent. My God, Emily Dickinson dominates the century practically.

**Hardy:** There's something very interesting about this. It is possible to write a history of English poetry, of the whole of the canon up to the end of the nineteenth century mentioning only one woman poet, Emily Bronte. I am speaking now not about American poetry, though you haven't got many in the nineteenth century you need to mention. But you could not write a history of English fiction and leave out women. And I think women's experience has allowed women to write novels, but it has been very much more difficult for women, whose emotional range has been very, very restricted, to write poetry. I do think there is a big genre difference here. You've got Emily Dickinson in the nineteenth century and we've got our Emily.

**Gilchrist:** In the late fifties all of a sudden we've got Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton. We've got this burgeoning of incredibly powerful women poets in the United States; and all the women in the United States including myself that aspired to write began to write poetry in the shadow of Sexton, primarily Sexton, and then all of the ones after.

**Humphreys:** I think Virginia Woolf said that fiction had attracted in the past more women than any other art. And she said the reason is that it is the easiest. But I like to think that what she meant was that it's the most accessible. Women have been able to do it in secret without anyone knowing—you know, hiding their work and working at it in spurts. I did that myself, so I know you can hide it. And I think that's one reason that we may have gravitated towards it. I don't know exactly why poetry also couldn't be clandestine.

**Questioner:** Given what you've just been discussing, would each of you comment on the way writing has affected your everyday lives?

**Humphreys:** My everyday life has been totally transformed by writing because I have come to think and see in a totally different way. My normal life before I started writing, which was happy and healthy, is now neither one of those things. I am constantly questioning things. I have gone from being very conservative in most things to what I consider extremely radical. Because writing questions things. You fall into that frame of mind. And my everyday life, more or less, has disintegrated. I can go to the grocery store now, and I can cook food. So there are a few things I can still manage to function in, but I'm on the edge of it. I'm always looking through things and looking through experiences and people to try to figure out what the answer is. And I don't think that's a normal every-
day life. I think in the long run it can be very disturbing. And the more I write the more I become like that. It's a kind of circular process.

Shivers: I will have to say it's affected me in entirely the opposite way. I was never healthy and happy because I was always trying to find that missing thing. I never was able to fit in. I never found people to talk to, so that kept me unhealthy and unhappy. This may be us finding it at different ages or many other reasons too.

Hardy: One very obvious thing—the reason I think a lot of women have not written is that women leading a conventional, domestic life tend not to have solitude. And you have to have solitude.

Questioner: Mrs. Humphreys, would you say you are losing your identity through this?

Humphreys: No. The opposite. I am gaining my identity, but I'm losing the capacity to find an identity that doesn't include writing. Writing—'it's like a fungus—it has taken hold and taken control.'

Hardy: One of the most outstanding little examples of writing in everyday life is Jane Austen, who didn't have a study. She used to have a blotter and as soon as visitors came—she couldn't get away from the visitors so she would slide her manuscript under the blotter. The amazing thing is that she wrote anything at all. She had to do it in this crowded world over which she had absolutely no control. She couldn't say, "Oh, I'll go upstairs now. I'll go and write."

Gilchrist: You can't ever tell when all of a sudden you're going to need long periods of solitude. And I don't mean all afternoon or all weekend. It may take three or four months. You may need to get in the car and go somewhere for three or four months. It's very difficult—you can't explain this to young children. Though maybe if the children grew up with it like Jo's have grown up with Jo writing, maybe they think it's well she's out of their hair.

My children love to think that I am on a piece of work because they know I won't call them up at 8 o'clock in the morning and give them some advice.

Questioner: Nineteenth century novels tend to end in marriage. It seems like recent novels begin in divorce. What's happening to the American family in novels?

"Writing—'it's like a fungus—it has taken hold and taken control.'"  
Josephine Humphreys

Hardy: Some nineteenth century novels, because they didn't have the possibility of ending in divorce, ended in death. I think family life has always been rightly suspected. It's always been looked at as suspiciously comic or tragic—nineteenth and twentieth century.

Shivers: I think we are all trying to deal with that, in the books we are doing.

I had to kill a couple of men off in my first book. In the second one you have a divorce, but you also have a marriage. We are trying to figure all that out.

Questioner: Yesterday Ms. Shivers said she wrote for herself. I took that to mean that it was her standard that was important, not the standard of the New York Times. But how important to you is publication? And who is that dear reader in your mind when you write?

Shivers: That goes back to what I just said in answer to the other question. I am trying to figure it all out. I am trying to figure myself out. And so, therefore, I am writing for myself.

I think the thing about publishing is that that's the way to do two very important things. By being published and being acknowledged you get a little money and a little respect. Somebody knows that you are doing something. Before you are published, people just don't take you seriously. The other thing that publishing does is that it's given me friends. I have had a chance to meet other people who are writing and I didn't have that chance before. Until you publish you don't usually have that chance.

Questioner: Who do you think your audience is? Would each of you please answer that?

Humphreys: I have two audiences in mind. One is a very vague, general bunch of people that I can't identify but who are probably a lot like me. In that sense I am writing for myself. But I also frequently have in mind real people whom I want to win. The first one happened to be someone who was no longer alive, which made it an odd undertaking. I have specific people in mind. I want them to like it.

Questioner: I was struck by what Louise Shivers said about the importance of making friends through her publications—that is, friends who are also writers. I would be curious to hear what the members of the panel might say about what role other writers, currently writing writers, play in their lives as writers. What do you get from them?

Shivers: Knowing that when you are sitting in that room by yourself, and it's just as painful as it has ever been, you are not by yourself.

Next week we will be back wherever we all are. I will be back home; I'll know that Gloria is back. But I'll hear that hurricane that she read about, and I'll think . . . "Well, she's lonesome too." I remember one day, about a year and a half ago—maybe I shouldn't tell this—but Jo and I were really feeling in the pits about the books that we were writing. I either called her or she called me and we just talked to each other. She said, "God, this young adult novel I'm writing!" And I said, "Well, I'm writing this stupid romance novel." It helped just to know she was there. We didn't have to see each other or talk that much. It just helps to have somebody to say it to—to know that you've got other people out there who care.

Hardy: For people starting out who may not have met writers, it's very important to know that literature isn't written by gods and goddesses and doesn't come out in printed form. It is written by people with arms and legs, and written with pens and on type-writers. I think it is very important to get the ordinariness.

Humphreys: It's also nice to realize that essentially literature is not competitive—though that's easy to forget in the system we have today. I like to know that there are other writers with whom I am not racing and that we like each other's work. That we are in some ways working toward the same end.

Sharp: I thought what Ms. Hardy said underscored the impetus for having this symposium. It's important that we hear the voices of writers. It's also important to see that they really have arms and legs and hair and everything, and to identify with the person behind the printed page. I think it has been a great experience. I want to thank them. They have been incredibly giving of themselves. □
WINNING BIG FOR ALABAMA’S BABIES

BY ANN GREEN

With Ann Green heading a staff of young writers, the Alabama Journal won a Pulitzer Prize for focusing attention on the high infant death rate in Alabama.

When your newspaper wins a Pulitzer Prize, you get an invitation to a sedate little luncheon in May in New York City.

They ask you to come to Columbia University’s Low Library, a wonderful old building that’s graced probably a hundred movie scenes, but isn’t really a library anymore. There, in a room with a rotunda, you put on your best table manners and make polite conversation with a few literary lions and journalistic giants.

The president of Columbia makes a short speech, noticing how the luncheon honoring the winners is only a recent addition to the Pulitzer tradition, which stretches back to 1917. Until a few years ago, the university that awards one of literature’s and journalism’s most prestigious prizes would just put the checks in the mail, and that was that, he says.

But the people in charge of the awards kept hearing about a syndrome of post-Pulitzer emptiness developing among the winners. They reasoned that, since the feeling of emptiness might be due to simple hunger instead of a block in creativity and a general desperation about what to do next to top the Pulitzer, it would be nice to throw a free lunch for the honorees.

The fellow presiding at the luncheon reels off the names of a few previous winners in literature and poetry—Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Robert Frost, Willa Cather. And you look across the room at people who garnered their Pulitzers in journalism at the Wall Street Journal and the Miami Herald.

Then they add your paper’s name to that august company and read a citation. They give you a check for $3,000 and a certificate with the university’s corporate seal affixed, enclosed in a light blue diploma case.

And if you come from a paper like the Alabama Journal in Montgomery, it’s all pretty heady stuff.

After the lunch, two members of the staff and I took turns holding that diploma case on the subway ride back downtown to our hotel. Occasionally, I’d open it and peek inside, just to make sure it was real.

I guess we could be forgiven for missing our subway stop that afternoon.

The Journal staff won the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for general news reporting for a series of stories on Alabama’s high infant mortality rate. The newspaper also was named a finalist for the Pulitzer for public service, which was won by the Charlotte Observer for its investigation into the Jim Bakker-PTL scandal.

Several weeks before the Pulitzers were announced, the Journal was notified the series had won a Distinguished Service medal for Public Service from Sigma Delta Chi, the society of professional journalists. The series also finished second in the National Headliner Awards and won the Alabama Associated Press Community Service Award.

That’s not bad for a struggling afternoon newspaper with a circulation of 20,000.

Montgomery is a good news town. It’s the capital of Alabama and proudly still calls itself “the Cradle of the Confederacy” in a state that even more proudly proclaims that it’s the “Heart of Dixie” with two red hearts on automobile license plates.

Black activists and a few newspaper editorial writers, among others, are still pushing to remove the Rebel flag from the capitol dome.

The Journal is located just down the street from that capitol, where former Gov. George Wallace built a populace movement and proclaimed, “Segregation now, segregation forever.”
Even though the capitol has been closed for months for renovations and Wallace has been out of office for almost two years, the smell of his cigars lives on in the dark, wood-paneled governor's office.

But there's another legacy in Montgomery. Every morning when I arrive at work, I can see the steeple of the tiny Baptist church on Dexter Avenue where Dr. Martin Luther King was pastor and helped launch the Montgomery bus boycott that sparked the Civil Rights movement.

Also nearby is the Southern Poverty Law Center, where a lawyer named Morris Dees plots strategy in his war in the courts on the Klan.

There's a sharp division here between rich and poor and, even now, between blacks and whites.

Montgomery is a town that tends the old houses and old oaks along its streets, and sometimes on late summer afternoons when a thundershower turns this place into a steam bath, I take a deep breath and remember that Zelda Fitzgerald came back here to her hometown and sank deeper into madness on these same streets.

When I was hired as city editor at the Journal in early 1987, the managing editor, Jim Tharpe, told me he wanted the staff to do one major project a year. This was in addition to the daily round of police news, coverage of the legislature and other facets of state government, city and county government stories, and school and health beats that are the standard fare of any newspaper.

There was only one catch: the Journal has only seven reporters on its news staff.

Big papers have special projects staffs, generally made up of highly experienced investigative reporters who spend months digging and researching and writing and polishing in producing a series.

But to do a big project on a paper the size of the Journal requires months of commitment on the part of editors and reporters to perform their normal daily duties in addition to working on the project.

It takes meticulous planning and results in long hours and frayed nerves.

We chose infant mortality as our topic for the project for several reasons. In the spring of 1987, the latest statistics on infant mortality, compiled from the previous year, showed Alabama with the highest infant death rate of any state in the nation. For every 1,000 live births, 13.3 babies died. In 1986, 788 Alabama babies did not make it to their first birthday.

Only the District of Columbia, with its concentrated pockets of urban poverty, had a higher infant death rate that year.

We reported the statistics and the reaction of state officials, and we took some quick stabs at providing possible explanations for why so many babies were dying.

But something was missing. We decided that we needed to tell the human story behind the statistics, to put faces on the numbers.

We picked four reporters and sent them, along with photographers, on the back roads of Alabama to talk to the women who were losing their babies. We decided to show people the poverty in our state.

We talked to doctors who told us about women who knew little about nutrition for themselves or their infants, about 13-year-old "children" having children, about the lack of health clinics and adequate transportation to the clinics that are available.

"You don't have to go to Africa or South America to see Third World conditions," said the sole female physician staffing the health clinic in the little town of Pine Apple in Wilcox County. "They're right here in the rural South."

Josephine Lewis, a 24-year-old woman in Eutaw, told about the deaths of her twin girls. She had a long history
But getting transportation to a west Alabama clinic wasn't easy; she didn't seek prenatal care until her third trimester. And since she lived in poverty, nutrition wasn't really a high priority. She fed her kids, then herself.

Josephine gained so little weight during her pregnancy with the twins that maternity clothes were unnecessary. When she delivered prematurely, one of the twins died 30 minutes after birth. The other remained in the hospital for two months as physicians monitored her growth. When Josephine brought the baby home, she lived about a month—until three days after Christmas.

We contrasted Josephine's care with that of a woman who got the most up-to-date medical care in Montgomery. She, too, had a problem pregnancy, and her son was born prematurely. But doctors pulled him through, and now she worries about spoiling her healthy son.

Another woman, age 74, talked about the cycle of life and death in rural Baker Hill. She lost children mysteriously, and now her daughters and granddaughters do the same.

"Unless you got the money, you can't get waited on," she said, when asked if health care is available to her family.

Ironically, at birth, this woman had been given a name evoking a fairy tale—Cinderella.

Next we looked at what other states, like South Carolina, are doing to tackle the infant mortality problem. And we pointed out that our state government had funded things as diverse as a Shakespeare festival and blueberry and chitlin festivals, but had virtually ignored the infant mortality problem.

The series ran over a five-day period in September 1987. About a week after publication, we got permission to reprint the series in tabloid form.

We then received more requests for reprints. One request was for 15,000 copies from a group representing doctors in the area. We had another press run.

Why did the Journal win the Pulitzer? We focused attention on a serious social problem, and the stories and photographs brought the face of rural poverty and death into the comfortable homes of capital city folks.

"They don't holler much, babies born with heart problems," one mother told reporter Emily Bentley as the woman described how her baby died and doctors couldn't help.

Newspapers, in the best tradition of the profession, holler for those in need. We looked at a problem that hadn't been adequately addressed in the state. And we were the first paper in Alabama to do so.

Tharpe and I were given almost complete freedom by our executive editor and publisher to plan, develop and edit the project. Of necessity, the Journal has to hire extremely young reporters—often just out of college—because the pay we can offer reporters is so low. So it's important to have editors in charge who know what they're doing and can channel reporters in the right direction on projects.

Tharpe and I were both seasoned journalists who had worked together as reporters early in our careers at the Greenville News. We'd also worked on projects before and knew what it takes to pull them off and to stay on track and keep focused when you're ready to quit. We'd been there.

Most of all, we had reporters willing to go the extra mile. As one of the editors says about his young reporters in the movie version of "All the President's Men," our reporters were "hungry"—hungry to tell a major
story, hungry to be recognized for their talent.

The Pulitzer certificate has been framed and is on the wall in the Journal newsroom now. Our company matched the prize money and donated it to a local health organization fighting infant mortality.

And now the reporters and editors are dealing with a new kind of hunger—that post-Pulitzer emptiness they warned us about at the luncheon. After all, what do you do when you're a 23-year-old reporter and you've snagged the biggest award of all?

Well, you try to keep it in perspective.

Summer comes on, and, luckily, there are stories to be written.

There are massive problems with Alabama's public schools.

The legislature will have to call a special session to come up with an education budget.

The buddy of the AIDS victim we profiled earlier in the year now has AIDS. He's willing to talk about the grief he felt as he watched his friend die and the grief he now feels because AIDS is ravaging his body.

A jealous ex-husband goes crazy with a knife one night and slashes the quiet of a blue-collar, suburban neighborhood. He puts five people in the hospital before someone puts a bullet in him.

And while the infant mortality rate in Alabama has improved since last year, it's still disgracefully high, especially among blacks. Where will the state find the money to fight the problem, and how can Alabama break that cycle of poverty that keeps rolling over rural infants?

These are stories that are the lifeblood of any newspaper that's doing what it should be doing.

The hours are long, the pay is terrible, and, in these days, the fate of any afternoon paper is uncertain. But if you love journalism, if you are irreverent and skeptical and like to dig and probe, there's nothing like it.

Back in Montgomery, far from the ivy walls of Columbia and the electric current that seems to speed up life in New York, one scene from last May remains with me more than any of the others.

The night we arrived back in Montgomery, two of the reporters who worked on the project, Bentley and Frank Bass, headed straight for the first newspaper rack they could find at the local airport.

They'd probably read four or five papers that day—papers they bought in New York or had picked up on planes on the trip home. But they hadn't had enough.

They found a rack selling the Alabama Journal. Still available were copies of the edition published earlier in the day while we picked up our Pulitzer. They plugged in their quarters and learned what they'd missed.

Hungry. □
THE RESEARCH PUZZLE

Should all college professors be judged by the amount of research they conduct?

Contrary to popular belief, a college teacher's life is not a leisurely one. Among other things, a Furman professor prepares lectures and meets classes, grades tests and papers, directs independent study projects and undergraduate research, advises freshmen and sophomores, helps majors plan for graduate school and careers, writes letters of recommendation, works with student organizations and serves on university committees.

But now even this may not be enough. In recent years at Furman, and at other liberal arts colleges, there has been a growing sentiment that faculty members should engage in substantial research in their disciplines and publish scholarly works. Furthermore, it is argued by some at Furman that the Faculty Status Committee, which makes recommendations concerning which teachers should receive promotion and tenure, should take research and publication more into consideration as it makes decisions.

Many faculty members think this would be going too far. Some disciplines, such as the physical and social sciences, lend themselves to visible research more readily than others, they argue. Good teaching, not research, should be rewarded at a liberal arts college like Furman. And so the debate goes.

In the following pages Furman faculty members Jim Edwards and David Rutledge present two views of this issue.
THE CASE FOR AN ACADEMIC LIFE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

BY JAMES C. EDWARDS

In 1970 Furman employed me as a member of its Department of Philosophy, and as a result I am expected to teach a certain number of philosophy classes, to do academic advising of students, to serve on university committees, and the like. Furman can, I believe, expect me to try to be the best teacher of philosophy and the best university citizen I can be; if I don’t aim at excellence in these respects, or if I markedly fall short of it, then I should not be rewarded with tenure, promotion or salary increases. But Furman can also expect more. It can also, I believe, expect me to be a working philosopher, not just a teacher of philosophy.

The distinction is crucial to my argument, so let me try briefly to clarify it. When I am teaching philosophy to undergraduates, the focus of my attention is those undergraduates and their philosophical understanding. I assume that the particular philosophical issue or text we are examining has something useful to say to these students, and it is my ambition to get the conversation started. That’s just what it is, I think, to teach philosophy to undergraduates: it is to instruct them in the art of serious conversation, a conversation with an issue or a text that has something interesting, perhaps even important, to say to them. In this endeavor the teacher’s focus must always be on the students. They must be led to listen and taught to respond; their comprehension is the key. Their enlightenment is the aim.

Understood in this way, teaching philosophy is an exciting and useful thing to do with one’s life, and I’m glad I get to do it. But to teach philosophy is not, in most cases, to do philosophy. To do philosophy is to have one’s own conversation with the text or the issue; it is to interrogate and to criticize a philosophical idea for oneself. Here the focus is different: as a teacher one is a discreet kibitzer on someone else’s conversation, trying to help it along; as a working philosopher one is a full participant in the interchange.

So teaching philosophy and doing philosophy are quite different activities, with quite different aims. To do philosophy is to inquire after the truth; the proper goal of the activity is the truth being sought. To teach philosophy is to help others, philosophical beginners, to become inquirers after the truth; the primary goal here is their progress as truth-seekers, not the truth itself.

Dr. Ramiro Sanchez, who teaches chemistry at Furman, is currently engaged in research to develop new compounds that may be used in medicines to treat cancer.

These activities, because they are so different, are typically pursued in different forums. The forum for teaching philosophy is most often the classroom or, in more ideal circumstances, the proverbial log with the student at one end and the teacher at the other. The forum for doing philosophy is, these days, a full-scale academic profession: a loose affiliation of organizations, conventions, journals and scholarly presses.

To do philosophy, then, is to have a professional academic life outside the classroom. It is to work with a different audience in mind; not an audience of philosophical novices, but an audience of fellow professionals, women and men who care about the same set of texts and issues that you do and who have spent a great deal of time thinking about them. And to be a working philosopher today means to write philosophy, since that is the standard way philosophers communicate with each other about the matters that are their defining objects of interest.

I am claiming that Furman can legitimately expect me to aim at two different excellences: excellence as a teacher/university citizen and excellence as a working philosopher. We would all agree that the first is appropriate, I suppose, but why should Furman
expect the second? Why is it not enough that I do a good job teaching my classes, advising my students, and serving on my committees? Why should I also be expected to go to scholarly meetings, join professional societies, and write philosophical books, essays and reviews?

There are some obvious answers to these questions, such as the claim that research makes me a more knowledgeable and self-confident teacher. But I want to focus for a moment on another reason, one that cuts a bit deeper. It has to do with what we may call character and its relation to my work at Furman.

The philosopher Hannah Arendt makes a useful distinction between work and labor. According to her, both work and labor are self-conscious, intentional expenditures of time and energy directed toward producing something, a product; the difference is that the worker believes the product to be of intrinsic and enduring worth, while the laborer believes the product has only extrinsic and temporary value. As an illustration, think of the difference between a painter who believes that her paintings are valuable in and of themselves, just because they are true or beautiful works of art, and the factory worker who realizes that the widgets coming off his line are of no real worth to anyone, except as they represent a way of filling his pay envelope. The painter is truly working as she paints, according to Arendt; the assembly-line employee is merely laboring.

This difference is a difference of character, i.e., a difference in the relation of the inner person to the outer form of his or her life. The painter's character is whole: she does what she truly cares about; there is no great split between what she most profoundly values and how she spends most of her time and energy. Painting is, she believes, worth all the effort it requires of her. She is at one with her life as it is lived. With the factory laborer it is different: he does not care about what he is doing per se; he makes widgets only because he will realize some financial interest thereby. Here there is a split, an alienation, between the inner and the outer man. His form of life, or at least a large part of it, does not exemplify his own basic convictions of worth; thus he is essentially at odds with himself.

This is fundamentally a matter of character, as I have said, for no life can be of sound character when there is a large gulf between inner ideal and outer reality. The basic narratives we tell ourselves about ourselves need to chime with the way we actually live. Otherwise, as with the laborer, we are not the characters—the persons—we most want to be. We are living false lives, acting in the wrong dramas, saying lines we have not written and that we cannot deliver with conviction.

I hope it is clear that this sort of alienation is a bad thing, something we would all do well to avoid. But what does it have to do with the place of faculty research at a college like Furman? To my way of thinking the connection is fairly direct, since I believe that Furman, like any other college or university, ought to be a place of work, not labor, and that a crucial part of a Furman education is to teach our students the essential importance, and the difficulty, of honoring that distinction in our everyday practice. As an academic community Furman ought clearly to exemplify a character—especially in relation to work—that is appropriately whole and unalienated, so that our students can aim at such a character for themselves.

Students tend to look to their teachers for clues about how to live. If the life we live shows alienation and hypocrisy, then likely they will learn from us. If they see us as laborers, putting in our time and waiting for the weekend, then they will tend to see their own studies here as labor too, not true work, and to see a life of such labor stretching out before them.

If, on the other hand, our students see us working, doing what we do not because Furman pays us to do it but because we truly care about doing it, then perhaps they will be encouraged to work as well: to work here at Furman in the first place; and then to hold out for work, not mere labor, as an essential part of whatever life they go on to from here to live.

Research, broadly understood, is one fundamental way we professors have of showing that we truly and deeply care about what we profess. I am a professor of philosophy; that means that philosophy is what I profess. Philosophy is what I hold out to students as worth all the time, effort and frustration it so obviously entails. Why should they believe me? Because I tell them so? No, talk's cheap. Because they can easily see it for themselves? Not usually, because the rewards of philosophical effort don't come quickly enough to satisfy our American cravings for instant gratification. I suspect what gets a student to take philosophy seriously is that he or she sees me or some other philosopher taking it seriously. And that means more than just teaching courses.

The point of a college education is, I believe, to find something like philosophy to fall in love with, something that one can truly work at for the rest of one's life. And it is the fundamental task of a college faculty to show forth these potential objects of love and work, to help others to see them as worth all that they demand. Partly that will be done through lively and effective classroom teaching, of course; but I doubt that is quite enough. What will my students think if they hear me enthusiastically professing the virtues of the philosophical life, yet never see me actually living it? How can I encourage them to do philosophy for themselves if I never do any philosophy of my own, but only talk about the great work others have done? Is there not an incongruity in my professing to love something, in this case philosophy, and yet not undertaking to care for that thing in the most direct and forceful way that I can?

Certainly there is. Love always shows itself in action. And how do philosophers nowadays show their care for philosophy? How do they tend and cultivate the ideas that they love? By talking and writing about them to other philosophers: that is how we can—

In a study of South Carolina's right-to-work law, husband and wife team David Roe and Jean Horney, who teach economics at Furman, are collecting data on the percentage of the labor force that is unionized, wages in both union and non-union industries, and other demographic variables.
\[ \Delta T_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \Delta P + \sum \beta_2 \Delta X + \beta_3 U_t + \sqrt{T/E} \]
even if we are, in Locke's phrase, but poor underlaborers—help to keep the garden growing. If I can't plant glorious flowers, like Plato or Hegel, I can at least pull weeds.

So in my view, research is not just a means of personal career development, not just a way to help Furman make its reputation in the wider academic world, not even just a way to juice up my classroom performance or to get my students into better graduate schools. Most fundamentally, research is the way I work as a philosopher. It is the way I try to care for what I profess to love. It is an indication that I am not, like the factory worker, alienated from what I do.

Whether we like it or not, we professors profess, and our students judge us in those terms. Given the kind of college that Furman professes itself to be, it seems reasonable to me that it should expect its professors to work—not labor—at what they profess, whether it be philosophy, chemistry, music, or accounting. Some of that work, perhaps even the lion's share of it, will show itself in the classroom; it will show itself in how we talk about what we claim to love, and in how we try to help our students to love it as well. But part of it will show itself elsewhere as well: in essays, in books, in exhibitions and performances.

Understood in this way, "research" is not a dirty word for a liberal arts college. Certainly we must guard against losing our distinctiveness by trying to be just another full-fledged research university. Certainly we must avoid any mindless publish-or-perish standards in faculty evaluation. And certainly we must evaluate quality as well as quantity in scholarly production. With foresight and good will these pitfalls, and others, can surely be escaped.

Research does not alienate us from our mission as Furman professors; on the contrary, it can be true evidence that a typical form of alienation has been overcome, that inner ideal and outer reality are appropriately congruent. Since I believe that Furman is in the business of developing such soundness of character in its students, it seems reasonable to expect the same wholeness of its faculty. I ought to work at philosophy, not just teach it.

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**THE DANGERS OF THE WRONG KIND OF RESEARCH**

BY DAVID W. RUTLEDGE

The term "research" comes to us with a long history in American higher education, and often carries specific connotations. It would be naive to assume that in importing "research" into Furman, we necessarily would be importing a practice that fits perfectly with the tradition, current faculty and facilities, and purposes of this university. Since almost all of Furman's faculty have been trained in graduate research universities, we often unthinkingly assume that the research model which governs those institutions should govern here as well. After all, the Stanfords, Harvards and Michigans have the highest status in the research world, and if we strive for excellence, why shouldn't we emulate the pattern of these "mega-universities"?

The reason I would give is that scholarly research at Furman should not conflict with the purpose of a small undergraduate college, which is necessarily broader than that of a research institute. If research is not carefully tailored to the needs and possibilities of the liberal arts environment, some of its tendencies toward narrow specialization, quantification of results and grant-seeking could wreak havoc with other values to which we say we are deeply committed.

These negative elements of academic research are not accurate for research as a whole; they are an exaggeration of certain tendencies which I see lurking in most of our professorial hearts at one time or another, and which bear close scrutiny. Specialization, for example, is a norm of modern research, and in the proper measure is obviously a crucial, necessary stage of scholarship. During each term, students come in wanting to write 10-page papers on "Religion in World History" or "Science and Faith," and my first task is to help them define their topic more precisely, to narrow the subject down to the realm of the possible. This effort to break down an object of study, to analyze its parts, to reduce it to its bare particulars, is natural enough in research. But it can also become unbridled, leading us to think that it is the individual fact, stripped of its context, described in an abstract symbolism or technical jargon, which is the most dependable form of knowledge. We subtly and unconsciously transform specialization from an incidental phase of research into the final result of it.

With the help of student assistants, Dr. Hayden Porter is exploring the field of image understanding, whereby computers view scenes through cameras and then identify objects they see.

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*Dr. James Edwards '65, who holds a master's degree from the University of Chicago and a doctorate from the University of North Carolina, currently serves as chairman of the philosophy department at Furman.*
goal for which we work. In such a transformation the connection of bits of information to each other is subordinated to the effort to be absolutely precise and unambiguous about one particular bit of data. Knowing more and more about less and less is appealing because it gives us a greater sense of certainty about our results, and we take great pride in collecting vast numbers of such facts.

Surely at an undergraduate college, however, we must be especially sensitive to the big picture, to the general patterns that link areas of life together. Relatively few of our students are going to become research specialists, but all will need to be able to think critically and clearly about general issues of life that cannot be as neatly compartmentalized as this research philosophy would suggest. While specialization is the first step in scholarship, surely at a college like Furman the last step must be to relate this new knowledge to the larger framework of what we know already so we can present it intelligibly to students in the classroom. Thus, teaching at Furman should be seen as an essential step that completes research, that transforms the isolated fact into an increment of understanding. In this setting, specialized research cannot become an end in itself, but must be constantly connected to our efforts to broaden our students' grasp of the world. To paraphrase a familiar aphorism, "Research without teaching is dumb; teaching without research is blind."

A more profound reason to be wary of certain models of research is that they could limit Furman's opportunity to become a unique institution, a place where issues of general significance can be addressed with a seriousness and flexibility not often found in modern American education. Personally, I would love to see Furman become what might be called a "radical" Christian college, in which the claim that "the truth shall make you free" is taken seriously. "Radical," from the Latin "radix" or "root," means going to the heart or root of an issue, and Furman should strive to be one of those few places in the world where human beings try to live up to their natures as creatures of almost infinite possibility, as men and women who go to the heart of things—in art, in science, in literature, in living.

Such a place, for example, would appropriate the best of the Western tradition to question actively all efforts to enshrine social, religious or political

Recipient of the 1985 Furman Award for Meritorious Teaching, Dr. Gil Einstein hopes to learn more about prospective memory (remembering to do something in the future) through his research.

intolerance from the right or the left, or attempts to elevate acquisitiveness and self-centeredness to the highest of values. Such education would shatter the narrow forms of provincialism that prevent people from seeing their commonality with the rest of the human race, and that prevent us from respecting the life of the mind and the spirit as much as we respect sports, monetary success and entertainment. Such a college would acquaint students with the natural world that shapes them, and with the resources available for tackling the problems facing their generation. This kind of place would require an openness to general questions, an emphasis on central principles and issues rather than narrow research that leaves everyone isolated, working only within the framework of his or her own special project.

I'm aware of how idealistic this sounds and how slim the chances are for winning the consensus necessary to create such a place. But surely we need a powerful vision to sustain us when all of the pressures in education, as in life, are to remain mediocre, just doing things—including research—like everyone else.

Another way in which our view of research can be integrated with the goals of the institution is to acknowledge that we will not have "whole persons" on the faculty unless we recognize that people have a life that extends beyond their specific professional tasks. This is a delicate point that is hard to make responsibly, but I think that a commitment by the faculty to wholeness, to character, demands that we try. Scholarly research is done by human beings, who display, at Furman as in society at large, an astonishing variety of personalities, talents and interests.

We should insist on research at Furman, but should also be sensitive to the differences between people, as well as disciplines, that affect the research that is done. People mature intellectually at different rates, and work in different ways, at varying speeds. The circumstances under which faculty work constantly change, affecting their ability to work beyond their normal teaching responsibilities (marriage, raising children, health problems, caring for others with health problems, departmental limitations, etc.). A particular

...
project undertaken by a professor might also place unusual constraints that are not readily apparent on his or her productivity: a teacher of creative writing, for example, might work for years on a novel, whereas an individual poem might be written and published much more quickly; yet each is a single product of scholarship.

Such factors may or may not be relevant to a given professor’s situation, but our institutional structures must remain humane and flexible enough to consider such personal elements. "Wholeness" in a faculty member is not solely a function of professional considerations. "Work" is more meaningful than "labor" precisely because it relates our job to the rest of our lives. Lifework is what we are ultimately about, so that a professor’s participation in redesigning the curriculum, or in developing and maintaining foreign study programs, or even in retraining in a new area of competence, might prove to be tremendously important, despite being unpublishable.

I would ask that in evaluating our scholarship for promotion and tenure, we would consider the special circumstances of each individual and the larger purposes of the community, as well as the abstract interests of scholarship. One of the greatest concerns of faculty on this subject is the fear that a greater research emphasis will introduce a purely quantitative scale into the evaluation process ("Has Professor X published enough items this year to merit this promotion?"), thus overlooking the variety of circumstances under which people work. Quantitative standards can be seductive precisely because they make complex issues so simple: they reduce judgment to counting. Schools, and good ones, have succumbed to this seduction more than once.

Though I urge caution, I do not see an increased emphasis upon research as necessarily threatening to the Furman faculty. My colleagues have an impressive and growing reputation among their peers around the country for their contributions to scholarship, and the teachers who students describe as the most exciting in the classroom are usually those who hold themselves to the highest standards of scholarly productivity. We have begun to develop a healthy relation between these two tasks, as seen in certain departments and programs at Furman which have already developed successful and innovative programs for integrating faculty research with undergraduate teaching. It seems just possible, then, that Furman may be in a unique position to find new and bold solutions to the research puzzle—solutions which are not simply copied from the mega-universities, but which arise from an awareness of the symbiosis that must exist between teaching and research at the undergraduate level.

I suggest that our need at Furman is for men and women in the administration and the faculty to be alive to the challenge of awakening students to a wonder and curiosity that will last for a lifetime. A commitment by the university, and by each faculty member, to improved research efforts within a context of undergraduate teaching can make Furman the rare place where wholeness and integrity are the routine achievements of our students.

Dr. David Rutledge, who received a master’s degree from the Duke Divinity School and a master’s and doctorate from Rice University, has taught religion at Furman since 1980.
LETTERS

HARD TO DISCARD

No doubt you have received many compliments on the excellence of the Furman Magazine, but I want to add my viewpoint as well. The magazine is getting so good, looks so outstanding, and contains so many interesting, in-depth articles about Furman people, places and things, I find each hard to discard. I have kept Winter 1988 here by my desk since it arrived, and from time to time, I re-read parts. I especially liked the articles about Dale Davis and her agency and the successes Karl Allison and Ted Swindley are enjoying. As I read, I wish I had become involved in the Theatre Guild while a student, but I was so busy taking all those courses under Mrs. Gilly, Dr. Reid and others!

Congratulations on a fine issue. I must say, I also enjoyed the photographs and articles on the Roe Art Building, which appeared almost a year ago.

Keep up the marvelous work you're doing with the magazine!

Rachel Sherwood Roberts '62
Auburn, Ind.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

The Furman Magazine Winter 1988 issue arrived as my introduction to the publication. Inside, the "A Class Act" article is a delight to read. The mood and message of the piece are very close to the feelings I have for and from the Furman theatre department.

Rhett Bryson's statement regarding the practicality of a theatre major has special meaning I realized only through applied energy in the "Real World." I chose a theatre major not only for my personal interest, but because the course of study allowed me hands-on training instead of just book knowledge. I hope this is something current students realize and can take full advantage of as they work toward their degree.

"Every obstacle becomes an opportunity" is valid even if one learns what it is to fall and start over. I can attest to that through personal experience.

My career has covered a wide variety of experiences in the arts and entertainment medium. I owe Rhett Bryson and the theatre department a great deal of gratitude for the preparation I received.

Murray D. Chapple '81
Charlotte, N.C.

EMPHASIS ON THE ARTS

With a great deal of interest I read the article in the Winter edition of the Furman Magazine about Dale Davis. It reminded me again of how gracious you were to me several years ago and how sensitively you write about people.

The magazine is certainly an asset to Furman University. I find myself reading every article and, of course, being reminded this time especially of the emphasis Furman has put on the arts and the fine careers many of the graduates are enjoying.

By concidence I had time to read the magazine while I was a guest of RJR Nabisco at the Dinah Shore Tournament in Palm Springs, so it was appropriate for Betsy King's article to be in this issue as well.

Rachel Sherwood Roberts '62
Auburn, Ind.

THE LONG VIEW

It has taken me some 18 years to tell you, but without a doubt the Furman Magazine is outstanding. When the latest issue came, I read it cover to cover and this issue is just as sparkling as was the one that you did some 18 years ago on women. Over these years you have not lost one ounce of your superb sense of journalism, style and creativity. A truly remarkable performance.

Jean Galloway Bissell
Washington, D.C.

Editor's Note: We invite your letters of comment, which will be published in future issues of the Furman Magazine.
THE RESEARCH PUZZLE  How much faculty research is good for a liberal arts college?