

4-1-2019

Farmer's Vision, Gifts Benefit Students

Vince Moore
Furman University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine>

Recommended Citation

Moore, Vince (2019) "Farmer's Vision, Gifts Benefit Students," *Furman Magazine*: Vol. 62 : Iss. 1 , Article 12.

Available at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol62/iss1/12>

This Regular Feature is made available online by Journals, part of the Furman University Scholar Exchange (FUSE). It has been accepted for inclusion in Furman Magazine by an authorized FUSE administrator. For terms of use, please refer to the [FUSE Institutional Repository Guidelines](#). For more information, please contact scholarexchange@furman.edu.



Thomas Farmer '50, who died in 2014, gives a speech in 2007 at the dedication of Thomas Spann Farmer Hall. Farmer Hall houses the Office of Development.

Helping the next generation is a noble aspiration — and one that Thomas Farmer realized countless times over during his lifetime and beyond.

The estate of the late Thomas Farmer, a 1950 graduate who was among Furman's strongest supporters, made a \$6 million bequest, bringing his total giving to the university to nearly \$10 million.

Furman University President Elizabeth Davis announced the gift in December. Farmer, who died in 2014 at the age of 90, gave Furman a total of \$3.8 million during his lifetime.

"Thomas Farmer was a loyal alumnus and one of Furman's most generous supporters," Davis said. "He gave much to the university during his life-

Farmer's Vision, Gifts Benefit Students

BY VINCE MOORE

time, both in terms of his time and his financial resources, and this bequest is another example of his amazing generosity. It also demonstrates the power of planned giving, and how it can provide a lasting benefit to our current and future students."

A portion of the bequest will go to the Thomas Spann Farmer Endowed Scholarship and the Christina Farmer

Waring Endowed Art Scholarship. Both support Furman's Partners Program, which allows scholarship donors to personally connect with students who benefit from their philanthropy.

The bequest will also support Furman's Office for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, which develops entrepreneurial leaders on

campus, regardless of major or discipline, and encourages a culture of innovation.

"The gift from Tom Farmer is very special and a testament to his passion for Furman," said Vice President for Development Heidi McCrory. "It demonstrates his belief that the university, through its students and alumni, is positively shaping and strengthening our community and the broader world. Bequests and other planned gifts like this are statements of confidence in Furman's mission, and they create a legacy of philanthropy that will impact generations of students to come."

Farmer's devotion to Furman began decades ago.

He graduated magna cum laude in 1950 after returning

"THOMAS FARMER WAS A LOYAL ALUMNUS AND ONE OF FURMAN'S MOST GENEROUS SUPPORTERS."

from duty with the United States Army and Army Air Corps during World War II. While a student, he served as president of the student council and a member of Blue Key and Quaternion.

After graduation, Farmer spent a year at Furman as director of public relations and then worked for Berlin Myers Lumber Corporation until joining Lowe's Companies, from which he retired in 1986. He opened the first Lowe's store in South Carolina and was active with the Low Country Food Bank, the Rotary Club of North Charleston and his church, Bethany United

Methodist in Summerville, South Carolina.

The ways he committed his talents and resources to Furman remain innumerable.

Farmer served on Furman's Advisory Council and was a sustaining member of the Richard Furman Society and an adjunct member of the Furman Board of Trustees Development Committee. In addition to supporting the Partners Program, his financial contributions to Furman funded the Elizabeth Young Farmer Commons Room in Johns Hall and Thomas Spann Farmer Hall, which houses the Office of Development. ●



Thomas Farmer '50 was a cheerleader for Furman as a student and would go on to donate nearly \$10 million to the university.



Caroline Daly '19

NOW

Reflection on Furman as it is now

I began my freshman year at Furman eager to be shaped by my experiences over the next four years. Little did I know that the most impactful moments for me would entail investing in others to help shape and develop leaders.

My story begins with the Shucker Leadership Institute, a two-year program designed to help students develop leadership skills and engage the community through collaborative partnerships and meaningful service. Designing STEMulate as my Leadership Challenge Project for Shucker remains a highlight of my time at Furman. STEMulate was a program aimed at bringing professionals in science, technology, engineering and math fields into contact with fifth-grade students at a local Title I school. Its purpose was to expose students to new job fields, help them envision possibilities for their futures, and empower them to set and achieve goals through education. Our team navigated many obstacles while implementing this project, and those lessons remain invaluable. Watching the students' enthusiastic response to the program revealed to me the impact that effective leadership and perseverance can have on a community.

The positive feedback our team received inspired me in my leadership role for the Shucker Leadership Institute. I grew from my role as a new fellows

coordinator, which allowed me to develop a leadership curriculum for the program's incoming freshmen. This program included mentoring these new fellows as they devised and implemented their own Leadership Challenge Projects. Perhaps my favorite Furman experience has been coaching these students as they develop their own personal leadership styles and observing them as they apply their new skills across campus.

As I conclude my role as student director for the Shucker Leadership Institute, I cannot help but be grateful for the opportunities the program has afforded me. The experience has equipped me to lead and serve in many capacities. Esteemed mentors and treasured friends within the Shucker community have empowered me to invest in others toward the goal of achieving shared success. Ultimately, the time I spent at Furman was not primarily about my own formation. Rather, it has been about casting myself to create a ripple, touching the lives of those around me. Shaped in this way, I leave Furman prepared to lead through service, inspiring others to create their own ripples.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Caroline Daly '19 served as the student director for the Shucker Leadership Institute.