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'A PARAMOUNT TIME IN THE UNIVERSITY'S HISTORY'



A more complete telling of Furman's story.

BY SARITA CHOUREY

It was a day of tears and hugs, song and pride.

Hundreds of students, faculty, staff, community and family members of **Joseph Vaughn '68**, Furman's first African American student, came together on Jan. 29 to celebrate Joseph Vaughn Day and to reflect on his historic achievement. It was on that day in 1965 that Vaughn had enrolled as a student, setting the university on the course to desegregation.

"Today's event will lay the foundation for ongoing programming and initiatives, celebrating a paramount time in the university's history that started us on a journey toward becoming a more inclusive, equitable and just community," Furman University President Elizabeth Davis said during the day's ceremony.

In 2018, Furman's Task Force on Slavery and Justice released the "Seeking Abraham" report, which documents the school's early ties to slavery and makes recommendations. The report recommended the creation of Joseph Vaughn Day, an increased scholarship in his name, a sculpture of Vaughn to be placed in front of the library, and the placement of markers

and plaques throughout campus to tell a more complete story about the people and actions that shaped Furman.

The university selected artist Steven Whyte to sculpt the statue, which should be completed by next year's Joseph Vaughn Day.

Since receiving approval from the Board of Trustees, the university also has removed "James C." from Furman Hall and installed a plaque that honors the entire Furman family, noting "the diverse community of students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends who study, work and gather" on campus. The plaque acknowledges that while James C. Furman, the university's first president and the son of its namesake, worked to build and save the university after the Civil War, he was also a vocal proponent of slavery and secession.

The board also approved changing the name of Lakeside Housing to the Clark Murphy Housing Complex in honor of Clark Murphy, an African American who worked for decades as a groundskeeper at the Greenville Woman's College, which later merged with Furman University. A plaque placed at the front entrance of Judson Hall tells his story. ♦



▲ THE IMPACT OF HIS LEGACY

Pictured front left: Emma Tate-Valentine, Joseph Vaughn's first cousin, leads a march from the James B. Duke Library down Milford Mall to Daniel Chapel. She was among more than 30 members of Vaughn's family to attend the historic event.



A CITY PROCLAIMS 'JOSEPH VAUGHN DAY'

Adare Smith '20 holds a print of the city of Greenville's Joseph Vaughn Day Proclamation. Lillian Brock Fleming '71, who serves on the Greenville City Council, stands with her inside Furman's Daniel Chapel after the historic walk from the library. Fleming was one of the university's first female African American students when she enrolled in 1967, and in 1995, she became Furman's first female African American trustee.



HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE

Members of Vaughn's family with (from left) Furman Director of the Center for Inclusive Communities Deborah Allen and Chief Diversity Officer Michael E. Jennings place a commemorative wreath at Vaughn's grave in Resthaven Memorial Gardens in Piedmont, South Carolina. His cousins, Gwen Vaughn and Marcus Tate, stand on either side of the wreath.

JOSEPH VAUGHN '68 stands on the steps outside the James B. Duke Library. Though he died in 1991, his legacy lives on through a scholarship that the university expanded in 2018, and now, through the observance of Joseph Vaughn Day. The community will now recognize the historic day every Jan. 29, coming together in remembrance, celebration and hope.



LIFTED UP IN SONG

Choir Director Antonio Edwards (center) leads the Furman University Gospel Ensemble from the steps of the Duke Library, as the group opens the Joseph Vaughn Day ceremony with "The Lord Is Blessing Me."

