

4-1-2020

Then: Reflection on the Importance of Furman as it was

William W. Bradley '80

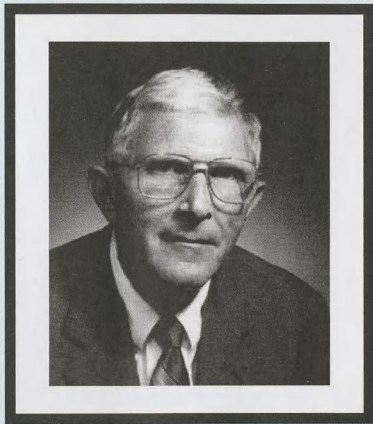
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Recommended Citation

Bradley, William W. '80 (2020) "Then: Reflection on the Importance of Furman as it was," *Furman Magazine*: Vol. 63 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol63/iss1/10>

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\$5 MILLION GIFT FROM ESTATE OF THOMAS C. TURNER '51 SUPPORTS STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS



Furman University received nearly \$5 million from the estate of **THOMAS C. TURNER '51** to expand support of academic scholarships.

The gift is designated for the Eleanor B. Turner Scholarship, established by Thomas Turner in 1995 in honor of his sister, and the Thomas C. Turner Scholarship Fund, an endowment he created in 1996. Both scholarships are awarded to Furman students who “demonstrate a financial need, exemplify high moral character and show academic promise.”

To date, 12 Furman students have benefited from the original Eleanor B. Turner Scholarship. After earning a mathematics degree from Furman in 1951, Turner volunteered for military service and attended Army Officer Candidate School, an experience that would shape his decision to become a college accounting professor. He died in 2018. ♦

THEN



WILLIAM “WILLIE” W. BRADLEY '80

Recently I was asked why I chose to attend Furman. I had a definite answer:

the personal touch of Charlie Brock, director of admissions at the time, the passion displayed by students and graduates for Furman, and the verdant beauty of the campus. Today I have deeper reasons.

When I arrived in 1976, Furman was celebrating its sesquicentennial and the inauguration of President John Johns. There was excitement everywhere! There was also a shortage of housing, and I had to settle into a forced triple. I had a conservative Christian roommate on the right and a hip, cool, urban “brother” on the left.

The conversations we had about almost everything were far beyond provocative and really foreshadowed the challenges that were to come.

Furman was challenging academically and intellectually for me; but if degree requirements and costs were not a factor, I would have enrolled in every course professors Jim Guth, Ernest Harrill, Ernest Walters, Don Gordon and Don Aiesi taught. Requirements such as the Cultural Life Program unbarred my mind and allowed me to see beauty, hear thoughts and to take action never before considered.

Similarly, Collegiate Educational Service Corps, now known as the Heller Service Corps, taught me how to help others in greater need than that selfish teenager that I was. It also formed my love for teaching and education, even after I earned my Juris Doctor. When Dr. Johns appointed me as an observer

to the Board of Trustees my junior and senior years, I quickly learned that an observer could recommend and respond to university policies as a trusted voice. That forced me to think, respond and act as part of a positive growing community – skills I have continued to hone throughout my career.

In those days, Furman was still in its infant stage in cultural diversity. Therefore, I used my membership in the Student League for Black Culture to help spread African American culture among all Furman students. And while there were only three black students in the Furman Singers at the time, the universality of music created a fellowship that could be seen and heard around campus.

I was, for sure, a Paladin through and through – win or lose! Besides, I loved our main cheerleader, President Johns. I will never forget his distinctly southern intonation when he would take to the bullhorn or microphone – especially when we were losing – with: “All right. Ah, F U one time . . .” There were no manufactured or electronically controlled noisemakers. It was just us, the diamonds in the rough.

Yes, Furman was the place that provided me with positive energy, whetted my appetite for knowledge, and made me more socially aware; and for that, I remain one of her loyal sons.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William “Willie” W. Bradley '80 is a teacher, educational consultant and retired school district administrator. ♦