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An Endless Impact

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AN ENDLESS IMPACT



Teachers trained at Furman find they can go anywhere.

BY CINDY LANDRUM

For 100 years, Furman has been sending educators into the world to mentor, challenge and foster a hunger for learning in students. Meet three education alumni who never stopped learning.

JOSH PATTERSON '02 AND '06

For Josh Patterson, public education is a ministry.

“Having people who mentored me made me realize I wanted to be part of that story for somebody else,” says Patterson, principal at the Sterling School and the Charles Townes Center in Greenville, South Carolina. “I knew I wanted to care for people, support them and help them realize their fullest potential.”

Patterson had already paid his room and board deposit at another institution before one of his mentors, the Rev. Bobby Morrow, a Baptist minister and a Furman trustee, convinced him to visit Furman.

“He told me not to close that door just yet. We went, and those doors began to open,” says Patterson, who earned a bachelor’s in elementary education and a master’s in school leadership from Furman. “I built relationships

with those professors, and I work with many of them today. I love being able to have that ongoing relationship with the education department.”

Patterson, who earned a Ph.D. in educational administration, takes a whole-child approach to education – which he credits to Furman’s liberal arts and sciences mission – focused on developing students intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

TANYA DIAZ '16

Tanya Diaz came from a first-generation immigrant family that spoke only Spanish at home, forcing her to learn English as she was learning to add and subtract. When she was 10, her parents moved the family back to Spain. But while Diaz could understand Spanish and speak it a little bit, she could not read or write it. Teachers helped her, and that experience led her to a career in teaching.

After working as a special education teacher, Diaz pursued a master’s in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages at Furman. It took her four years instead of the usual two because of family and health issues.

“Furman was so supportive during that time,” she says.

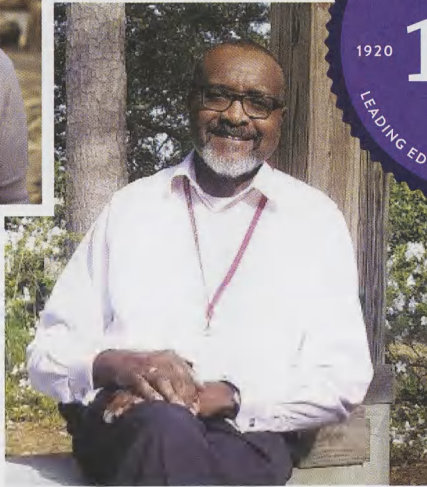
Diaz is now a special education coordinator of early childhood at the Berlin Cosmopolitan School in Germany, a position that allows her to combine her training in special education and TESOL.



Josh Patterson '02 and '06, principal at the Sterling School & Charles Townes Center, poses with a student at an annual open house event.



(Above) **Tanya Diaz '16**, special education coordinator of early childhood at Berlin Cosmopolitan School.



(Right) **Timothy Brown '82**, assistant vice president of academic programs at Trident Technical College.



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Furman's teacher residency program was established in 1999. Students spend a year in a teacher's classroom during their senior year, then have mentors during their first year of teaching.

Before that, she worked as a kindergarten teacher at the American International School in Cyprus, a private school.

"I would have never thought of teaching in another country, but Furman broadened what I thought was possible," says Diaz, who is pursuing her international teacher certification for Europe. "Furman provided me an opportunity to get out of my comfort zone."

TIMOTHY BROWN '82

Timothy Brown has done it all.

During his 37-year career he has been a public school teacher, graduate teaching assistant, college art history instructor and a college dean. In August of 2019, he became the assistant vice president of academic programs at Trident Technical College in Charleston, South Carolina.

But other than his very first teaching job as an art

teacher in the Greenville County School District, none of his other moves were planned.

"My degree from Furman has given me the flexibility to take advantage of the opportunities that have come my way," says Brown, who earned a bachelor's degree in studio art from Furman and took education courses via the department to get certified to teach art in the South Carolina public school system. He holds a master's in art history from the University of Iowa and a doctorate in education from Capella University.

In Brown's new role, he oversees curriculum development and the university transfer program.

"Now I have to take a global look. I have to think about all of our academic programs. It's been challenging. There's still plenty for me to learn," Brown says. "The nice thing about my new job is I get to do something so different." ♦