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LGBTQIA+ @Furman

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FROM A 1970 TALK-A-TOPIC PANEL ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY, TO FURMAN'S OFFERING OF BENEFITS TO DOMESTIC PARTNERS IN 2001, TO THE UNIVERSITY'S FIRST DRAG SHOW AND RISING STUDENT SUPPORT, A NEW VISUAL TIMELINE TELLS THE STORY OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY ON CAMPUS.

By Nashieli Marcano, archivist for digital collections,
and Jeffrey Makala, associate director for special collections and university archivist

Our new **LGBTQIA+ @FURMAN** timeline illustrates and celebrates the contributions, achievements and legacies our LGBTQIA+ community has made to enrich Furman's institutional history. Browsers will find an assemblage of photographs, newspapers and periodical articles, and ephemeral materials by, for and about Furman's queer community. It begins in the 1970s, when campus conversations and debates were taking place on the topic of homosexuality, and runs up to current events, such as last year's May Experience Queer Histories (San Francisco) Study Away trip.

Through an interactive website, the Furman Libraries have documented important aspects of LGBTQIA+ lives and experiences on our campus. To capture the diversity of personal achievements and milestones, we arranged the timeline by using the resources in Special Collections and Archives and by consulting widely with faculty members in the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies program.

We encourage our readers to think of this timeline as a loving space in which folks from all gender and sexual identities can celebrate the impact they have made and are presently making at Furman and in society at large. We hope this timeline will be a point to connect students and faculty, alumni, parents and friends with this part of Furman's history and to help us

all reflect on whose experiences are included and documented in our institutional memory – and whose experiences are still left out.

The launching of the site is timely, as we feel it is critical that we continue to support the present-day LGBTQIA+ community at Furman in the face of ongoing challenges to LGBTQIA+ rights, realities and representation.

Special thanks for the creation of this project go to Furman professors Nick Radel, Savita Nair and Scott Henderson, and the staff of the Digital Collections Center in the Libraries.

We recognize that this work is very much an ongoing project, and that alumni from many eras also have important stories to tell. If you have anecdotes, stories, documents or other points of interest that could add to this growing timeline, we welcome hearing from you. Please reach out and connect with us at nashieli.marcano@furman.edu or jeffrey.makala@furman.edu.

**VIEW THE TIMELINE AT:
[BIT.LY/LGBTQIATIMELINE](https://bit.ly/LGBTQIATIMELINE)**



1970

Panelists at Furman
Talk-A-Topic event
discuss homosexuality.

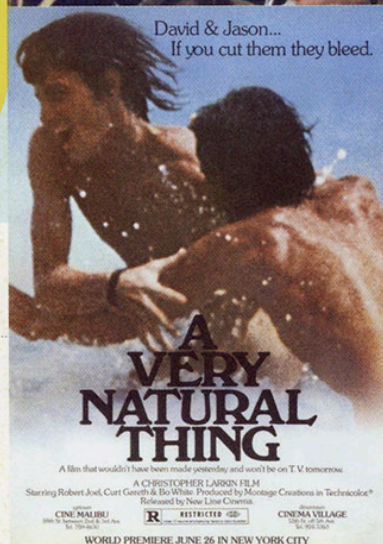
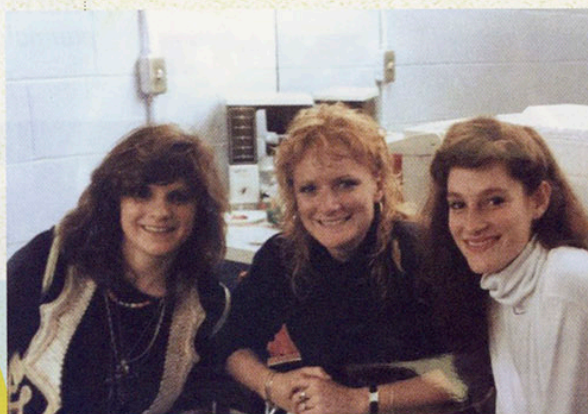
*"That homosexuality
should be treated as
an illness and not as a
crime was the consensus
expressed last Tuesday
night in a Talk-A-Topic
panel discussion on the
general subject."*

(THE PALADIN,
VOL. 55, NO. 19)

1990

*Indigo Girls in concert
at Furman*

Sarah Worth '92, far right, today a
professor of philosophy at Furman,
with the Indigo Girls



1974

*Robert McLane '65
stars in ground-
breaking film "A
Very Natural Thing"*

"A Very Natural Thing" was
one of the first mainstream
films to focus on same-sex
relationships, centering on
the lives and experiences of
several gay men in New York
and on Cape Cod in the post-
Stonewall, pre-AIDS era.

"We have been told
that college is preparation for
the 'real world.' But the real
world is one where people
have premarital sex, where
people get sexually transmitted
diseases and where people
are dying from AIDS."

EDITORIAL BOARD FOR
THE PALADIN



1992

*Professor Nick Radel, who
serves as faculty advisor of
Furman's first gay group to form
on campus, becomes the first
openly gay faculty member.*

1997

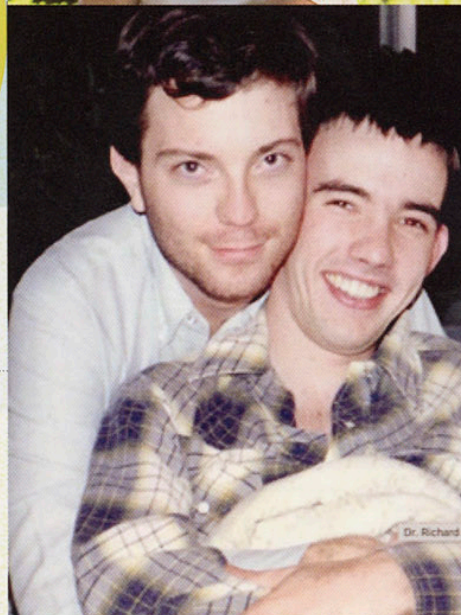
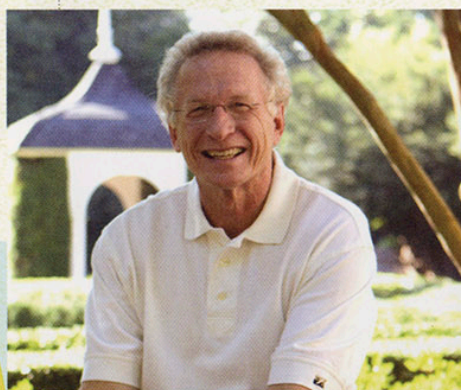
Friends of Lesbians and Gays group is excluded from Preview Day Fair.

"The admissions office decision not to allow student group Friends of Lesbians and Gays (FLAG) to participate in the prospective students' activities fair... is seen by some as practical and by others as indicative of the university's discrimination against the group."

JODIE TILLMAN '99
(THE PALADIN)

1998

Richard E. Prior, left, (d. 2010), an associate professor of classics (1994-2010), and Scott Henderson, right, a professor of education (1998-present), become the first openly gay couple to teach at Furman.



2001

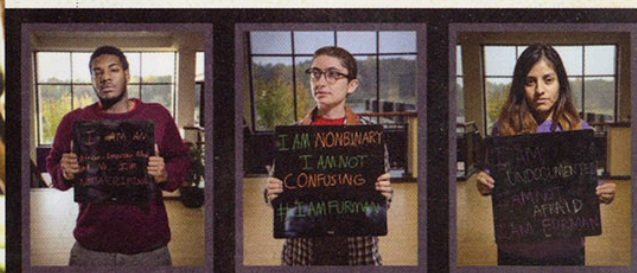
Furman offers benefits to domestic partners.

"We want to ensure that all of our faculty and staff — and their families — have access to our benefits."

PRESIDENT DAVID SHI
(GREENVILLE NEWS ARTICLE)

2016

I AM FURMAN campaign launches.



I AM FURMAN
PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ON CAMPUS

"Relaunched in fall 2017, Furman's Safe Zone Program helps ensure that there will be faculty and staff members across the university trained in providing non-judgmental support and guidance for students who want to explore issues about their sexuality or gender in a one-on-one environment."

FURMAN'S SAFE ZONE

2021

FU football player Ryan Deluca '21 comes out as gay on social media.

"Ryan's been a great student, player, teammate and friend to everybody in our program and on campus. We love him and support him — always have and always will."

FURMAN HEAD COACH CLAY HENDRIX
(FURMAN NEWS ARTICLE)



2022

Furman awards first Bachelor of Arts degrees in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

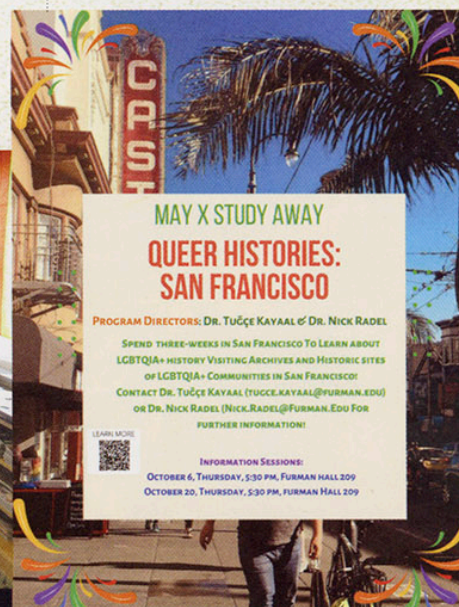
"My biggest approach to WGSS is recognizing that I don't know everything and that things are far more complex than even I'll understand."

OLIVIA GLADD '21
(FURMAN NEWS ARTICLE)



2023

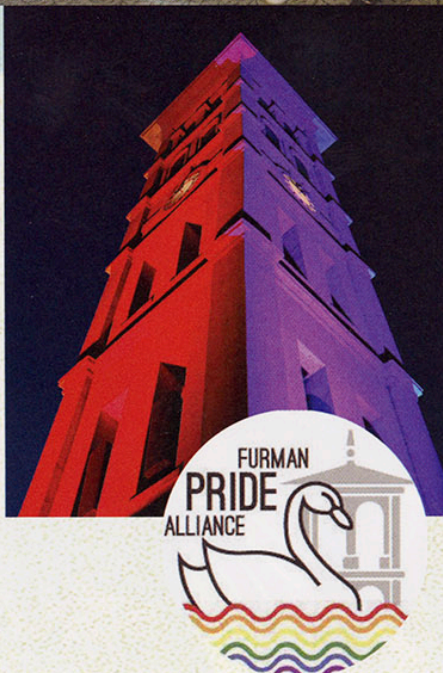
Professors Nick Radel and Tuğçe Kayaal lead the Queer Histories (San Francisco) May Experience course.



2018

Out at Furman is founded.

Furman's LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff founded Out at Furman to represent a supportive community that celebrates the diversity of sexuality and gender expression found throughout campus.



2024

As of spring 2024, the Furman Pride Alliance has over 200 student members. ♦