From the Chair

It is with great pleasure that I write you from the newly renovated History Suite in Furman Hall. As most of you know, during the past two years the History Department was scattered into many locations on campus as Furman Hall was gutted and completely reconfigured. The construction process proved to be arduous, nasty, noisy and disconcerting. For those of us who remained in the building during some of the worst of the work, the smells and noise were unbearable. At times, the place smelled worse than a New York subway station. The heating/cooling system often did not work, and instructors often had to scroll to be heard over jackhammers and pounding. Such challenges are behind us. In early August the department moved into its new headquarters at the north end of Furman Hall. We have a large suite that comes complete with thirteen offices, a large reception area, a workroom, a map room, a kitchenette, and plenty of storage. It is downright luxurious and the alumni who attended Homecoming were impressed. Decorating the suite is one of the stained glass windows from the Furman Chapel at the old campus downtown, as well as a tapestry from the Museum Store of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We also have comfortable sofas and chairs for students to study in while awaiting appointments with professors. Classrooms in Furman Hall are fully equipped for multi-media presentations and Internet access. We are in good spirits. Everyone feels that it was worth the wait and turmoil to receive such user-friendly accommodations.

In terms of the department itself, this year we are sponsoring a foreign study trip to Central America in the Spring (Erik Ching); in the Fall of 2006, Jan Kiely is planning to take a group of students to China and Jim Leavell will join the England trip with the English Department. Jim, by the way, is retiring at the end of 2006 as Herring Professor of Japanese History. He has taught at Furman for thirty years and will be sorely missed. The department is in the midst of a search to replace him. The candidates look splendid.

We have no new professors in the History Department this year. However, Courtney Tollison ’99 and Rob Hart ’94, both of whom have taught with us before, are holding one—year appointments. Erin Shelor ’92, who taught with us from 2002-2005, has landed a tenure-track position at Millersville State University in Pennsylvania. We wish her well.

The history faculty continue to distinguish themselves professionally. In early 2006, David Spear’s long-awaited volume on the Anglo-Norman cathedral clergy will appear, as will Diane Vecchio’s book on Italian immigrant women. Erik Ching has several volumes in the pipeline in Latin American Studies, which we expect to see in print in 2006. Meanwhile, Jan Kiely has been awarded a Public Intellectuals Program Fellowship, which is awarded to a select number of Chinese scholars under the age of 45. This is a huge honor. Savita Nair is planning a foreign study trip to India for the winter of 2007. John Barrington is making excellent progress on his manuscript on national identity formation in British North America in the eighteenth century, and Steve O’Neill is having great success with his Huff Center for Piedmont History. He is currently working on a book-length study of the Roedy-Saluda watershed. Lloyd Benson is nearing the completion of his work that compares Mississippi and Indiana during the ante-bellum era. In September, he and his wife Vicki welcomed an adorable daughter into their family. We are thrilled for them. Bill Lavery is actively directing the Center for International Studies. Jen Davis is proving to...
jobs as midwives and businesswomen. Demonstrating the regional variation of Italian women’s work as well as the skills they transplanted to America serves to balance the image of inexperienced and low-skilled laborers that dominates scholarship on Italian working women. Vecchio’s research on Endicott sheds light on the gendered nature of life in a ‘company town’ governed by welfare paternalism, while her research on Milwaukee emphasizes how Italian immigrant women turned to small business enterprise when local opportunities for wage-earning were limited. This comparative method helps to move beyond reductionist theories and conventional portraits of Italian women to explore the diverse factors that prompted them to seek certain kinds of occupations to the exclusion of others.”

From the Chair continued...

be an excellent addition to the department, proving that old adage that good departments hire good faculty. And Tim Fehler remains as steady as ever, just barely finding room for all his books in his new office. My job remains busy as ever holding this bunch together.

As many of you know, John Block retired as professor of history at the end of Winter Term 2005. Many celebrations were held to honor John and his distinguished service to Furman in the years since 1968, when he first joined the faculty. We have not yet replaced him, but are hopeful that we will be able to do so soon.

Many of you may have heard that Furman is undergoing a curriculum review process. We are moving from our three term academic year to a traditional semester system with a mini-May term attached. We do not yet know what this will mean for the History Department. We are concerned about the impact on study abroad, but we are hopeful that administrative leadership will do what is necessary to retain it as a centerpiece of Furman’s education. On the other hand, the new plans call for the introduction of freshman seminars, and the department is excited about that possibility. We face the future with bewildered excitement. So do our students. Our list of majors is robust—at graduation in June, we counted a total number above 150. Our majors are bright, animated, and planning exciting careers in teaching, medicine, law, and business. A number are applying to graduate school in history.

Both students and faculty deeply appreciate your generosity in contributing to the History Alumni Fund. It has meant a great deal in enriching our programs and supplying “extras” for our students. We thank you for your continuing support.

We hope that all of you will visit us in the History Department when you next come to Greenville. We look forward to welcoming you and showing you around the suite. Please stop by!

— Marian Strobel

BACK ROW, L TO R: Lloyd Benson, Savita Nair, Marian Strobel, Diane Vecchio, Courtney Tollison, Jim Leavell, Jan Kiely.
MIDDLE: Tim Fehler, David Spear, Jen Davis, Rob Hart, John Barrington.

A view from the entryway, including Carolyn’s desk and stained glass.
A Busy Year for Guest Lectures

This past year, the department hosted more than half a dozen guest lecturers. They brought to us an array of rich and engaging insights, making it a busy, but highly rewarding year of intellectual dialogue. Here is a synopsis of a few of them:

PETER STEARNS ... In December 2004, Peter Stearns, professor of history and Provost of George Mason University, spoke to a packed house of students and faculty about ways to rethink globalization in history and better understand its role in reshaping people's lives in their work, cultural expressions, and political identities. The title of his talk was, "Globalization in Historical Perspective." Earlier in the day, Stearns participated in a History Department Faculty forum entitled "Western "Western Civilization in World History" in light of departmental changes to HST 11 (from "Western Civ" to "History of the Modern Era." President David Shi attended the faculty forum. Stearns also met with several history majors about their interests in graduate history programs.

TIMOTHY BREEN ... In April 2005, Timothy Breen held a seminar with the history faculty on a paper from his current research on the American Revolution. He later delivered a public lecture on popular mobilization of everyday men and women in the Revolution.

MATT LASSITER ... Matt is a '92 Furman summa graduate in history. He went on to the University of Virginia where he earned his Ph.D. under Paul Gaston (Steve O'Neil's mentor). Lassiter is currently an assistant professor at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor where he teaches 20th—century U.S. history. He won a meritorious teaching award at the University of Michigan. Matt's talk centered on his recent book, The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South, due out Fall, 2005. In that book, and his talk at Furman, Matt analyzes compares major metropolitan areas in the sunbelt, ranging from Charlotte to Phoenix, on the issues of race, schooling and politics. He is advancing a major argument about the often unspoken centrality of race to the rise of the GOP under Nixon in the early 1970s and their ongoing success in presidential politics.

BOB PRATT ... In January 2005, the History Department hosted Robert A. Pratt, noted Civil Rights scholar and chair of the University of Georgia history department. He spoke to Marian Strobel's "U.S. History, 1941 to Present" class on the South Carolina roots of the Brown decision and then gave the keynote public address for Furman's Martin Luther King, Jr., Celebration. His talk was entitled "The Radical King: Martin Luther King's Vision for Social Justice and the Pitfalls of Historical Memory." Pratt challenged the myths and stereotypes surrounding King, and emphasized his anti-poverty and anti-Vietnam war positions that have often been selectively omitted by the media, textbooks, and current-day politicians.

JOHN TURNER ... In April 2005 John Turner, Furman class of 1993, currently professor of history at Kennesaw State University, gave a seminar to history majors on the topic of "The Challenges and Rewards of Doing Islamic History." He also delivered a lecture to interested students entitled, "How did We Get Here? The Iraq War in Historical Perspective."

Some Faculty Doings

Editor's Note: Can you figure out which our 13 faculty failed to respond to my requests to send me a professional blurb?

JOHN BARRINGTON ... During fall term 2004, John co-directed a Study Abroad Program to the British Isles and Iberia. History majors who took part spent two weeks visiting sites in Portugal and Spain associated with the discovery and conquest of America. In May 2004, John delivered a paper titled "Symbiotic Strength: an Eighteenth-Century View of Britain's Relationship with America" at a conference on "America through British Eyes" at Warwick University, England.
Asleep at the helm?!

Can you identify which one of his colleagues the newsletter editor caught napping in the office? Hint: this faculty member has a new baby, participated on the university's overwhelmingly time-consuming Curriculum Review Committee, continues work on a major research project and continues to dazzle in the classroom. All that aside, the newsletter editor finds the scene in the photo more personally inspiring.

Reading Suggestions:

- Elizabeth Kostova, The Historian (2005). A big bestseller, which seems surprising given that so much of the plot revolves around old books, libraries and archival research. But it's a vampire story involving the hunt for Dracula in the 20th century by historians drawn into a web of intrigue by mysterious books. The book's strengths lay in its rich and... continue on next page

Some Faculty Doings continued...

LLOYD BENSON ... During the summer Lloyd participated in the Summer China Experience for incoming first year students. In November he gave a paper at the Southern Historical Association meeting in Atlanta entitled "The Fertile Ground: Family Structures and the Evolving Rhetoric of Secession in Late Antebellum Mississippi." In December he was invited by the PACSCL consortium of Philadelphia to give a paper on the Ideological Geography of the Civil War Era: Some Examples." In September he and his wife Vicki welcomed their new daughter Eleanor to the family.

ERIK CHING ... After driving home from a spring '05 sabbatical in El Salvador, under the auspices of a Fulbright grant, Erik spent the fall term writing on a variety of research projects relating to 20th-century El Salvador. He had time to write thanks to a course release from Furman's Career Advance Planning (CAP) grant.

JENNIFER DAVIS ... Jen presented a paper titled, "Naturally Good Taste: Gender, Education and Aesthetic Ideals Among Cooks in Eighteenth-Century France," at the Berkshire Conference of Women's Historians at Pomona, California in June 2005. Thanks to a travel grant from Furman's Research and Professional Growth Office, she will be conducting further research for her book on French cooks at Cornell University over winter break.

TIM FEHLER ... Went to Germany on a research trip and spent three days in an obscure rural prison for declaring publicly that the Reformation is actually quite boring and he'd much rather study the history of German beer consumption.

JAN KIELY ... Announced publicly that he really hates China and the only reason he studies it is so he knows what to order at restaurants.

BILL LAVERY ... Bill taught a global issues seminar at the South Carolina Governor's School in Charleston in summer '05 titled "Roots of Rage: Ancient Conflicts in Contemporary Times." In early September he went to Edinburgh, Scotland to settle eleven Furman juniors and seniors into their internships for fall term. As director of The Center of International Education it was his happy duty to welcome a large incoming class of international students from China, Trinidad, Jamaica, Australia, New Zealand, Bulgaria, Japan, Korea, the United Kingdom, Canada and Moldova.

JIM LEAVELL ... Jim continues serve as director of the South Carolina Center for Teaching about Asia (SCCTA). The purpose is to help secondary teachers increase their confidence with East Asian materials in their social studies classes. Among a wide variety of responsibilities and duties relating to SCCTA, Jim helped run two 45—hour courses between January and June 2005—one on the Furman campus and one in Charleston. Jim teamed up with Jan Kiely to take a group of graduates from these seminars to China and Japan for three weeks during the summer.

SAVITA NAIR ... Savita received a grant from the Global Partners East Africa Travel Research Consoritia to make a preliminary research trip to East Africa to explore local archives, libraries, and volunteer associations such as mosques and temples, in preparation for more sustained future research. She plans to compile family histories of Indians in Kampala and Nairobi.


DAVID SPEAR ... David's book, The Personnel of the Norman Cathedrals during the Ducal Period, 911-1204, will be published this fall by the Institute of Historical Research of the University of London.

MARIAN STROBEL ... Attended a week—long seminar this summer on Maritime Studies at Middlebury College in Vermont. Marian hopes to offer a course in this field once the new curriculum is introduced (freshman seminar?). She continues research on Eudora Ramsay Richardson and her feminist crusade, as well as changing gender roles in American colleges/universities in WWII.
Some Faculty Doings  continued . .

DIANE VECCHIO
Diane was invited to present a paper entitled, “Family and Labor Migrants from the Campania, 1890–1937,” at a small conference of Italian scholars at the University of Pittsburgh in April. In Fall 2005, she presented a paper at the Social Science History Association in Portland, entitled “Ties of Affection: Family Narratives in the History of Italian Migration,” which will be published in the winter/spring issue of the Journal of American Ethnic History.

Reading Suggestions  continued . .

detailed descriptions of areas in Eastern Europe and Turkey that involved years of research by the author. Movie rights have already been sold.


• Jared Diamond, Collapse (2004). By the author of Guns, Germs and Steel. Provides a wide ranging look at why particular societies have failed throughout history. Draws it to the contemporary with a look at Rwanda. He uses great prose and makes broad and distant issues meaningful and applicable. Steve O’Neill used it in his senior seminar on environmental history.

An Interesting Interview with Vernon Burton ’69

Vernon Burton is a professor of history and sociology at the University of Illinois. After growing up in Ninety Six, S.C., he attended Furman University. He is now a nationally recognized scholar of U.S. history with an emphasis on the South. He has authored eight books and dozens of articles. One of his most well-known books is In My Father’s House Are Many Mansions: Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina. A recognized teacher, Burton was selected from a nationwide pool as the 1999 U.S. Research and Doctoral University Professor of the Year, and in 2002 he was awarded the Graduate College Outstanding Mentor Award from the University of Illinois. It goes without saying that Burton has compiled an outstanding professional record, which serves as the lead in to the following interview with him from 2001. I found it online. In it, Burton credits Furman University, and especially its history professors for having influenced him greatly. I thought many of you might enjoy reading the portions relating to Furman. By the way, anyone interested in U.S. history might find the Web site worth exploring, as it offers many primary documents. http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6164

3. Did your historical views change in college?

I had wonderful history professors at Furman University. At first I was pretty quiet, because I talked “country” and dressed rather unstylishly. Even in 1965 Furman was the best school in South Carolina, and most of the students were from upper middle-class families with a few poorer students who might be heading for the ministry. One day, Dr. Winston Babb, a wonderful professor and human being, was talking in history class about how when he first came to Furman everyone knew what a “little head” was, but that for the last fifteen years not one student had any idea of what the term referred to. For some reason, I spoke up and told him I knew, and that I had worked in a cotton mill. From that day forward Dr. Babb “adopted” me. I suppose I became a history major because of his personal interest in me. And the personal caring about students that the Furman faculty exhibited certainly influenced me.

I suspect it was mainly Dr. Babb’s doing, though I do not know for certain, that I was selected for the Ford Carnegie Harvard-Yale-Columbia Intensive Summer Studies Program (ISSP). It was a wonderful program that was designed for minority students. There were about five or six non-African-American participants out of a total of probably one hundred students. In 1967 at Columbia University I took the Great Books “Contemporary Civilization” course that was set up for us in the program, and I had to take another “regular” summer course being offered. Someone placed me in a graduate lecture course on the Old South. They assumed, I suppose, that since I was from the South, that I should be ok in this graduate-level course, but I had never had any American history. Visiting Professor Eugene Genovese from Rutgers, celebrated at the time for his opposition to the Vietnam war, had just published a book, The Political Economy of the Old South, that electrified the profession. He was an extraordinary lecturer, weaving a remarkable web of ideas, and, if you bought into the tenets of his argument, you were hooked.

What I remember about the course (in addition to wondering why Gene and I were

continue on next page

Alumni News

(Editor’s Note: Please keep us posted, and if I got anything wrong or misspelled your name, well, you will see I didn’t list my e-mail address anywhere.)

STEPHEN BAGGETT, JR.

...is practicing law in Greenwood, South Carolina with the McDonald Patrick Law Firm.

HOPE BENTLEY ’05 ...is teaching at Northwest Middle School

MARC BETHE ...is a hospital-based pathologist near Orlando, Florida. He has two daughters: Ann, 14 and Kayla, 11.

NANCY BRANNING ALLEN ’04 ...is teaching at Geneva School in New York City.

CRAIG CALDWELL ’02 ...is attending graduate school at Princeton University in history.

CURTIS W. CALLAWAY ’00 ...is working as a PR Director in Danville, VA.

ASHLEY CARROLL ’05 ...is a M.A. student at N.C. State.
Interview with Vernon Burton

the only two males not wearing a beanie—never having seen a yarmulke before) is the paper we had to write on W.J. Cash, Mind of the South. I was so angry with Cash’s depiction of mill workers that instead of the four-page required paper, I wrote about thirty pages about how great the folks working in the cotton mill were and how Cash was wrong. Gene did not like the paper. He just wanted us to say that other areas besides the South had a frontier. He had no idea where I was from, and he assumed I was being presumptuous about my knowledge of the South. Gene got me very interested in Southern history. Interestingly, while Gene was a masterful teacher, I later elected a very different style from his. I prefer to present students with multiple interpretations in addition to mine, very different from Gene’s effective way of presenting a tight argument.

The following summer at Yale University I had a class with Bill McFeely and Joe Ellis. We read C.Vann Woodward’s Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel. That book showed me that history could make a difference, and that is when I considered becoming a historian. Because of Woodward, I began to see that one could use history to help people understand, and a new understanding can change the world, especially in terms of race relations.

In college I became active in the Civil Rights Movement and voter registration. In February 1968, the South Carolina Highway patrol killed three African-American students and wounded twenty-seven others who were protesting a segregated bowling alley in Orangeburg. This Orangeburg Massacre and the way the state officials tried to explain it away in the papers had an influence on me; I again realized how powerful the truth is and how important it is who wrote and taught history. I remember at a sit-in at the attorney general’s office, questioning the spin that the state was putting on what happened.

My senior year at Furman University, Dr. Benjamin E. Mays spoke during Religious Emphasis week. I had known a great deal about Preston Brooks from Ninety Six, but I had never learned that Ninety Six is also the home of Benjamin E. Mays, the long time president of Morehouse College, the spiritual mentor of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and the godfather of the modern Civil Rights Movement. No memorial markers commemorated this apostle of peace whose very life represented a heroic struggle for dignity and for civil rights. Getting to know Dr. Mays, learning that he often visited our same hometown, and that whites were unaware of who he was also influenced me about wanting to become a teacher and a historian. (There is now a memorial to Dr. Mays in Ninety Six.)

The wonderful professors I had at Furman encouraged me to go on to graduate school. Because of the Harvard-Yale-Columbia ISSP, I was also recruited for graduate school, and I elected to go to Princeton. There I encountered other really great teachers and role models.

I am still learning and changing my historical views of teaching. This last year has been terrific for me as a Carnegie Scholar. Through that program I have begun to explore the scholarship of teaching and learning in a systematic way. I was introduced to the work of Sam Wineburg, who studies how historians and students learn history. I have been trying to use some of what I have learned in my own teaching.

4. You have mentioned a number of positive and negative role models of history teaching that you have encountered from your high school days through graduate school. Which teachers do you think most influenced the kind of teacher you have become?

My Furman teachers influenced me because of how much they cared for students. They reached out to me and made me work hard to learn and to make up for my background. I will always treasure those relationships with my professors at Furman. I appreciated Bill McFeely’s passion for history and Joe Ellis’s encouragement. At Princeton, Sheldon Hackney was a role model as someone who is inspired by ideas. I am still using his ideas thirty years later, and they still seem fresh and new. Jim McPherson was a role model in the incredible breadth of his knowledge and his ability to synthesize and explain different interpretations. Both Sheldon and Jim made me feel like a part of the Princeton intellectual community and that made me work even that much harder in graduate school. I have tried to show that sort of respect for my undergraduates (and graduate students), and I believe that they work harder, are willing to read and write more, because they know that I genuinely respect them and their ideas, and that I care about them.
Special Congratulations to Two Alums...

JOHN ADAMS '94

From the Furman press release: "John Adams, a teacher at White Knoll High School, has been named South Carolina History Teacher of the Year by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and Preserve America. He received a $1,000 honorarium and a core archive of history books and materials was donated to his school library."

"I am extremely honored to have been chosen to represent the State of South Carolina as its Gilder-Lehrman U.S. History Teacher of the Year," said Adams. "The teaching of American history, for me, has never been 'just a job.' It is a calling. I hope that I can inspire my colleagues to find that belief within themselves and that my students continue to find that belief within me as my career continues."

Inaugurated in 2004, the History Teacher of the Year Award is designed to promote and celebrate the teaching of American history in classrooms across the United States. It honors one exceptional K-12 teacher of American history from each state and U.S. territory. The selection of the state winner is based upon several criteria, including: experience in teaching American history for at least three years; a deep career commitment to teaching American history; evidence of creativity and imagination in the classroom; and close attention to documents, artifacts, historic sites, and the other primary materials of history.

ED BRIDGES '67

As director of the Alabama Department of Archives and History, Ed Bridges received the honor of having the new $18 million west wing of the 65,000-square-foot facility named in his honor. It was done as a surprise during public ceremony in front of the archive building in October 2005. Bridges grew up in southwest Georgia, and received his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago after attending Furman. He taught history at a South Carolina high school and at Georgia Tech, and also served as assistant director of the Georgia archives before going to Alabama in 1982. The honor reflects his dedication to preserving Alabama's past and his loyalty to the archives, which has included turning down such prestigious job offers as director of the Truman Library in Missouri.

Retiree Profile:
John Block

Editor’s Note: Last edition we ran our first feature on a retiring faculty member, A.V. Huff. Caught a little behind, I was unable to get a first-hand interview with A.V. at the time (expect one in a forthcoming newsletter!), so I relied on testimony from faculty members who had known A.V. for many years. Fortunately, being more on the ball this year, I caught up with John, still giddy from the Whitesox World Series victory [note: no fair-weather fan there; he’s been following them for 55 years]. The hour I spent with John for this interview reminded me of what I have always found to be true with him: any time spent talking to John Block is time spent well and enjoyable.

John graduated from Furman in 1963 and the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1968 with his Ph.D. He took his first and only job back here at Furman in 1968. During his tenure at Furman he served as Department Chair between 1985 and 1994, and again between 1995 and 1996. In 1996, John became Furman’s Vice President for Athletics. He returned to the Dept. in 2000, where he taught for an additional five years before retiring and becoming Professor Emeriti in 2005.

History Alumni Donors

Thanks so much to all of you! (Sorry if we missed anyone)
Chris Atwell '88
Craig and Abby Caldwell III '02
Deborah Carlton Loftis '74
Robert Coggins '84
Michael R. Culler, Jr. '82
B. Lynn Deleo-Totaro '75
Jon K. Dumitru '03
Jack G. Duncan '60
Conan P. Felix '97
Julie Flaning '99
Warren E. Fowler '49
Trish Garrington Johnson '81
Ronald E. Goodwin '81
Patricia G. Johnson '81
Marion Leach '43
Deborah Loftis
Joe W. Peden '58
D.C. Reynolds '75
Virginia T. Self '98
Mr. and Mrs. Kent F Simmons '83
Leslie L. Smith '91

Alumni News continued...
EC: Why did you want to pursue an advanced degree in history and become a professor?  
JB: I come from a working class background in the south suburbs of Chicago. I worked many different laboring jobs, in a furniture factory, at a chemical plant and for a landscaping business, among others. I have sympathy for working people, because I come from them, but as a result I also don’t have any romantic illusions about a life of labor. Outside of my teachers in high school, I didn’t know anyone who went to college until I came to college. I was a serious and grateful student because I knew the challenges of life outside of school. I found education to be liberating; it created the opportunity for me to be whatever I wanted to be, and I decided that I wanted to pass that experience on to other people, so I decided to become a professor. I was drawn into an advanced degree more by my desire to teach than to pursue a particular research track.

EC: What drew you to German history in particular, and during your long encounter with the field, have you noted any distinct intellectual currents in the study of Germany?  
JB: I grew up in a town just south of Chicago called Steger that was settled by Germans, so I always had an affinity for things German. But when I was in college, WWII and the post-war recovery were still major factors. The Third Reich was a common interest of students of my generation, and many were driven to look to the past by a desire to better understand the events that led to its rise. I would say that the study of German history has been remarkably stable in one particular area, conceptualizing Germany’s responsibility. Initially, there existed a strong current of thought that demonized Germany and made it out to be somehow apart or exceptional from other Western countries in order to explain the atrocities of WWII. But over the long haul we have come to see that it was different by degree, not in substance. In short, A.J.P. Taylor was right many years ago when he said that England, France and the U.S. hold some responsibility for not having done more to stop Hitler early on. I find that Germans themselves have participated in their own demonization. To an extent, they lack a sense of confident awareness of themselves as a nation and a people as a result of WWII and the distinct ways in which they have re-educated themselves about the war. They did it more aggressively than skillfully.

EC: Talk to me about your experience at Furman and your perceptions of it as an institution over the span of your thirty-plus year career here.  
JB: First, let me say that I couldn’t have had a better experience than my time here at Furman. I was able to teach what I wanted, I participated in four study abroad programs, I was surrounded by excellent colleagues, and I’ve had wonderful students—bright, able and pleasant. I think the 1970s and early 1980s were my most enjoyable teaching years. I don’t mean this to be demeaning to our recent students, but back then students were more coachable, they weren’t driven quite so much by concerns over grades. I have found that my recent students tend to take their enrollment here more for granted than earlier students. But let me emphasize, that I have had overwhelmingly positive experiences with my student throughout the years; I’m talking about nuances here. EC: To what would you attribute the change in students, and, correspondingly, would you say that Furman has changed significantly during your years here?  
JB: Regarding the differences in students, I think it is a generational issue common to universities across the country. The current generation of college students sees higher education more as a birthright than past generations, who saw it as more of a privilege. Furman students today are significantly more affluent than past students. Certainly, Furman has changed dramatically in my time here. It has always been a good school with a strong reputation, but that was more local. In the ‘90s it sort of exploded onto the national scene.

EC: Would you characterize that growth as a steady uphill ascent?  
JB: No, it has been more a series of steady steps—an era of significant change followed by a period of continuity, leading into another brief era of change. Moving to the new campus was a big step for Furman, as was the arrival of Dr. Blackwell to the presidency. He had been President at Florida State, a prestigious position, but he wanted to come back to his alma mater, Furman. He helped recruit faculty from major graduate programs. For instance, when I came here in 1968 a degree from a school like Wisconsin wasn’t so common, whereas now it is more or less assumed. Certainly the break with the Baptists was a major event. It had to happen because anti-intellectuals had gained control over the Convention and their leadership wasn’t conducive to the type of higher education that Furman represented. But I have strong sympathy for our Baptist heritage; they built the school and provided me with a great education. How can I say this?...I find Baptists to be non elitist and optimistic. While we had to break with them, I fear we lost a certain attitude, and I miss that. But the break opened the door to a whole different type of support, and Furman has been on the climb ever since. Those of us with years of experience here have joked that President Plyer built the campus, President Blackwell built the faculty, President Johns built the endowment and President Shu has accelerated all three areas. Shi had a good situation and made it happen. Remember that Shi was largely a product of our History Dept., even though he majored in Political Science.

EC: What are your thoughts on Furman’s changes over the years?  
JB: Of course it has been wonderful and Furman is now a major institution of higher education. But with success comes loss, with growth comes loss, and sometimes that loss is palpable. We have lost something of our faculty cohesiveness, and I fear that we too have lost some of the student/teacher bond that was central to Furman and is so much the foundation of a liberal arts education. Sometimes I wonder what kind of people are becoming professors these days and what motivates them to want to be professors, and if those motivations are somehow different than that of professors one or two generations ago. I don’t want to overstate this, because I believe so profoundly in Furman, its students and its faculty. I guess I just feel that I was here at the best time in all of Furman’s history, but I’m biased by the fact that my experience here was so good that I can’t imagine it having been better.