FEATURES

2
Dreaming Dreams, Living Life
BY LIZ SMITH
Transitions, aspirations and transformations: A professor shares her thoughts on vocation and calling in this essay from a Lilly Center publication.

8
Strength in Numbers
BY LIZ SMITH
A Furman chemist describes the importance of mentoring and support networks for women in the sciences — followed by additional perspectives from alumnae.

14
A Tough Act to Follow
Who will succeed David Shi as Furman’s president? How the search process is likely to unfold.

16
Can We Agree to Disagree?
BY A. SCOTT HENDERSON
Given the harsh and severe tone of recent campus debates over high-profile speakers and programs, a committee is formed to study the problem — and offer solutions.

20
MAY X
It’s a hit! Participants in Furman’s inaugural “Maymester” share their experiences.

DEPARTMENTS

24
BECAUSE FURMAN MATTERS
26
FURMAN REPORTS
34
ATHLETICS
36
ALUMNI NEWS
48
THE LAST WORD
Dreaming Dreams, Living Life

ONE FURMAN PROFESSOR’S TAKE ON VOCATION, CALLING AND PURPOSE.

BY LIZ SMITH
Usually around the middle of their junior year, my advisees and the students I am close to stop by for a casual chat that turns into a longer discussion of what they are going to do with their lives. They have reached a precipice that I remember from college. For the first time, these students are facing an unpredictable future. It is impossible for me to give them the definite answer they are looking for — what job they should take, whether they should go to graduate school — but I do try to share with them some of the lessons I have learned in my own struggle to try answering for myself the questions that are facing them: What in the world am I going to do with my life? What is my purpose in the world?

First, I ask them, “What is your passion? What do you think is fun? When you have some free time on your hands, what do you gravitate toward? What is the class whose reading and homework you do first or save for last because it is your favorite?” What I am really asking them is, “What is your calling?”

The day I decided to become a political science professor was in the fall of my junior year at the University of North Carolina. I was walking through the infirmary, a green oasis among the dormitories and academic buildings. I was thinking about Dr. Pam Conover’s course in women and politics and about what I had learned about the difficulties women faced in the political world.

At that time, only 29 women served in the House of Representatives. The day I decided to become a political science professor was in the fall of my junior year at the University of North Carolina. I was walking through the infirmary, a green oasis among the dormitories and academic buildings. I was thinking about Dr. Pam Conover’s course in women and politics and about what I had learned about the difficulties women faced in the political world. At that time, only 29 women served in the House of Representatives.

“Then I was thinking about how much fun it was to study politics — how much I loved talking about politics with was in Miami, starting his new job as a special agent in the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Sometimes, there would be a 100-degree difference in the temperature between our two locales.

Neither my boyfriend nor my mother thought I would survive, given how miserable I was. But I did. I was able to do the one thing that is really what getting a Ph.D. is all about: stick to it. Really, we should call it the sticktiveness degree. I saw a lot of people who were a lot smarter than I fail to get a Ph.D., just because they were not willing to stick to it. In the end, the torture of graduate school was worth it. I had my eyes on the prize.

I tell my students this story because I think that it is important for them to understand that what is worthwhile is not easy. But when I got out of graduate school, I got the first job I applied for, and I have since had a fulfilling and meaningful career at a school that values strong scholarship, excellence in teaching and strong student-teacher relationships. And that leads me to a second piece of advice that I give to my students. I tell them to surround themselves with friends and colleagues who share the same moral values and priorities that they have or, in their ideal vision of themselves, that they would like to have.

This does not mean that they should just hang out with people who come from the same narrow range of experiences. It means to choose friends, acquaintances and workplaces that are not impressed by the kind of car I drive, the kind of purse I carry or how big my house is. I am thankful that I have found a vocation that allows me to learn something new every day, to tell others what I have learned, and that challenges me through example to be a better person than I am.

Lastly, I try to tell my students to find and give love — in particular, that they find something greater than selflove. For some, that means finding religion. For others, that means simply finding that one true human love. Try to tell them that, ultimately, success means nothing if it is only about oneself. One must find a way to be about something more than oneself. For me this has happened both through my family and through my vocation.

In terms of family, sharing this advice with my students is always a bit tricky. I find myself always wanting to push back against the trend here at Furman to get engaged, quite often before graduation. I worry especially about the young women who get engaged so early, knowing what marriage often does to a woman’s life by narrowing choices and creating significant responsibilities.

And, yet, at the same time, I hesitate to question or criticize. I often think back to my own experiences and how this have turned out for me and how important love has been to me — love for my husband and children and family most especially.

I was not so different from those female students who yearn for love and a family. When I was young, at age 17, for the Morehead Scholarship at UNC. I had made it to the final round at Chapel Hill, and I was feeling pretty confident. The committee was giving me positive vibes — until Duita Betts, a renowned author and award-winning English professor who had held my hand as she walked me into the board room for the interview, asked me, “Where do you see yourself in 10 years?”

I said the first thing that came to my mind: “I see myself married with a family.” As soon as it came out, I knew by their faces and their body language that it was not the answer they were looking for. It was 1980, and women were told to want to hear about my plans to cure cancer or play in the New York Philharmonic. I had just given them a 1950s “Saying Mona Lisa” kind of response. What was I thinking?

I ended up getting the Morehead, but only after being...
overachiever in many ways. I want to do things right. I love female students in particular who are so eager to get engaged. The obvious answer is yes. And yet, I worry about those young things that came out of my mouth? The first thing out of my mouth? A feminist and still do. How could that have been the first thing that came out of my mouth? I am a mother of two beautiful children, and I married to the love of my life, the boyfriend from college. And I ask myself: How could that have been the first thing that came out of my mouth? Should family and the one love no be our top priority in life? Should they not be what comes to mind first, what comes to mind when it is the last day of class, when one’s work and family? As a working mother of two young sons, I am amazed by how hard it all is. My husband and I wonder: Why did one ask us one hour how hard parenting is? We agree that parenthood is not only hard work and family job we have ever done. Why do children not come with an instructor’s manual?

Balancing work and careers is a constant struggle. What do you do when it is the last day of class, when one has to complete that last lecture before the final, not because he was scared or shy, but because he was so happy I was there. I remember how after the parade, during snack, when the children were giving their mothers for the day, my son said, “I pray for my mom.” I treasure the shrieks of laughter, the huge smiles as we play monster with me chasing my 4-year-old around, the rainbow’s pigeons. A couple of years ago, I found myself in what felt like a mild mid-career crisis. I had reviewed my mental list of gifts I have been given: a career that is so rewarding, for me or in what direction my research or interests will turn, as well as loving family, friends, students and colleagues. I research and write about will in fact contribute in some small way to making the world a better place.

The focus of my research has shifted over the course of my career. My dissertation was about creating social capital in American citizens, social capital being those networks and norms that allow people to work together mutually to solve collective problems. More recently, I have worked on issues regarding stereotyping, including sexism and gender. But no matter the particular focus, I try to make sure that what I research and write about will in fact contribute in some small way to making the world a better place.

In political behavior class that I taught a few years ago I asked students to write about the thing that is most important to them. Many wrote about their families, about the child they had to step out of the furman bubble, to interact with people they might never have interacted with, to understand government, and politics in a whole new light. In a political behavior class that I taught a few years ago, I asked students to write about the thing that is most important to them. Many wrote about their families, about the child they had to step out of the Furman bubble, to interact with people they might never have interacted with, to understand government, and politics in a whole new light. In a political behavior class that I taught a few years ago, I asked students to write about the thing that is most important to them. Many wrote about their families, about the child they had to step out of the Furman bubble, to interact with people they might never have interacted with, to understand government, and politics in a whole new light. In a political behavior class that I taught a few years ago, I asked students to write about the thing that is most important to them. Many wrote about their families, about the child they had to step out of the Furman bubble, to interact with people they might never have interacted with, to understand government, and politics in a whole new light.

As a working mother of two young sons, I am amazed by how hard it all is. My husband and I wonder: Why did one ask us one hour how hard parenting is? We agree that parenthood is not only hard work and family job we have ever done. Why do children not come with an instructor’s manual?

Having a career that is a true vocation — a calling — is so rewarding, for me or in what direction my research or interests will turn, as well as loving family, friends, students and colleagues. I research and write about will in fact contribute in some small way to making the world a better place.

The seminar came at the right time in my life. This seminar and my sister’s illness challenged me to think in ways I had not previously thought about my faith, my relationship with God, my relationships with my students, family and friends. I realized with renewed understanding what incredible gifts I have been given: a career that is so rewarding, as well as loving family, friends, students and colleagues. While I am still not sure what is in fact the next step for me or in what direction my research or interests will turn, I know that I need to enjoy the journey and to feel thankful for the opportunity to struggle every day with the right questions on the right side of history.
A timely NSF grant helps women scientists discover the value of networking and mentoring to their careers — and their lives.

Strength in Numbers

BY LAURA WRIGHT

Because we now know each other so well, we can recognize when someone is about to pass up an opportunity that is a perfect match for her abilities—or commit to a project that does not fit her career aspirations or personal interests. We serve as an informal check and balance system for each other. It didn’t take long for us to realize that women scientists at other liberal arts colleges could benefit from similar opportunities. Four of us decided to submit a proposal to the National Science Foundation’s ADVANCE Program. That would allow us to further explore how our mentoring project could be adapted for others. When word came that we had received $500,000 to support our proposal, we were ecstatic—and a bit awed by the responsibility to investigate whether our model work would help other women at similar stages in their careers.

The Underlying Goal of Our Ongoing Project is to promote the advancement of senior women science faculty at liberal arts institutions to the highest ranks of academic leadership. Five-member mentoring alliances, representing institutions across the country, engage in discussions and workshops about career and leadership development. While there have been many studies of the needs of women scientists at research institutions, no studies have focused on the environment they face in the liberal arts setting. The NSF was interested in evaluating our group’s strategy, as well as in assessing whether it would be of value in disciplines other than chemistry. With this in mind, we established three new alliances, two in disciplines other than chemistry. With this in mind, we established three new alliances, two in disciplines other than chemistry. These alliances are working to enhance the visibility, leadership, visibility, leadership, and visibility of the participating faculty members.

We are now completing the third year of the NSF project, and its impact is evident. One woman, seeking an opportunity to use her leadership and administrative skills, accepted her colleague’s nomination and subsequently received her institution’s support to serve as department chair. Another gained the confidence to write an NSF proposal and subsequently received a similar grant. Another raised the intensity, scope and visibility of her institution’s efforts to recruit faculty members to endowed chairs. Another successfully lobbied for a new position to manage the chemistry research center. A fourth was named professor of the year in her department. These women used the professional skills they had identified during our project’s workshops to increase their visibility on their home campuses. They had always been worthy of these types of awards, but they had just assumed people would know it. Taken individually, each is a major accomplishment in a career. As a group, they show that a network of horizontal mentors who provide support and encouragement can produce positive results.

I presented some of our initial findings at the 2008 Southeast Regional meeting of the American Chemical Society. Many women imparted their personal stories to me. They had always been worthy of these types of awards, but they had just assumed people would know it. Taken individually, each is a major accomplishment in a career. As a group, they show that a network of horizontal mentors who provide support and encouragement can produce positive results.

The first part of their question was easy to answer; the second, much more difficult. The NSF grant supports only the initial group of 20 participants. Judging by the number of women who expressed interest, it is clear that many need guidance on how to advance their careers. And it isn’t just women at liberal arts schools. I spoke with women at large state universities and some technical colleges, all of whom would benefit from access to an alliance.

The most unexpected encounter I had came toward the end of my presentation. A man had been standing in the background listening as I talked with two women. When we finished, he stepped forward and began to describe his own informal alliance. A number of years earlier, he said, he had developed health problems that precluded him from continuing to direct a traditional graduate research lab at his university. He had looked around for a new way to contribute to the discipline and realized that he could do research in chemical education pedagogy. Although no one on his campus focused on the same area, he was able to find a group of four chemists doing similar work at other institutions who were also looking for a peer group with which to share ideas and concerns.

As he talked, I realized that any one individual, man or woman, is working in isolation; there is a need for some type of support network. This man from a major research institution was so excited about our project that he was considering adding a new monthly column to a journal about educational change to show case-studies for career development. Our project has provided a lifetime for senior women scientists at liberal arts colleges. But others, in different disciplines and professions, are seeking the same thing. Our project can perhaps serve as a model for them to emulate. Being part of a mentoring alliance can become an amazing resource to help you find a better way forward in your career. And you might just end up with some of the best friends of your life.

The author has taught chemistry at Furman since 1983. She received the 2006-09 Alice G. Furman, Jr., and Janie Earle Furman Award for Meritorious Teaching. On the following pages, four alumnae/academics offer their perspectives on mentoring in their professional journeys.
Finding the right path

I was able to take full advantage of all the opportunities presented to me, and the “team” actually led me to a place that I believe I was destined to arrive. Now, as a full professor and executive vice president and provost at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn., I can truly say that I am headed in the right direction.

My path has been a bit unique, given the type of institutions I have served, and I still sometimes reflect on phrases I often used with my children: “Momma doesn’t know what she wants to be when she grows up.”

The NSF ADVANCE program resonates with me in that I rarely had the benefit of like-minded, similarly devoted individuals with whom to share stories.

There were often times that I longed to consult with someone who would understand my frustrations, my challenges and my desire to find purpose. At all levels there is a need for camaraderie, and we should all do more to help, advise, support and push each other forward. Whereas there are many workshops, fellowships and academies to “train” and direct individuals toward a particular career direction, these opportunities sometimes fall short in providing follow-up and guidance. A well-defined mentoring alliance clearly provides a targeted effort to assist and guide for the long term.

Given my own experiences, I now wish to help other women who are looking for guidance and purpose. Perhaps it is my training as a psychologist, or my genuine desire to give back. Regardless, there is a need for building alliances, identifying and selecting advisors and mentors, and sharing stories that may help another person find purpose.

Everyone faces challenges in advancing their careers, but it surely can make the walk more pleasant if there is someone to join you along the way. Therefore, I fully support the idea of a mentoring alliance and applaud the efforts of Laura Wright and her colleagues in providing a resource for women in the sciences. We should all learn from this and strive to create opportunities for women in other disciplines, emulating the model that has now been established.

— ANGELA WALKER FRANKLIN

The author, a member of Furman’s board of trustees, earned her degree in psychology in 1961. She was for many years a professor and administrator at Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta before moving to Meharry.

ONE OF THE MOST TRANSFORMATIVE experiences of my career came during three workshops that I attended in the spring of 2005, while I was pursuing my postdoctoral fellowship at Rockefeller University in New York City. The workshops were titled “Making Sure That Academia Includes You: A Cancer-Building Workshop for Women in Science.” For three Saturday mornings, women from multiple academic ranks — graduate students to junior faculty members — and from diverse scientific disciplines gathered to learn about coping and advancing within male-dominated academia.

The workshops, sponsored by the Gender Equity Project at Hunter College of the City University of New York and by the New York Academy of Sciences’ Women Investigators Network, were intended to help increase productivity and the likelihood of women receiving tenure and promotion.

The first session, “Gender and Basic Foundations,” uncovered one of the defining lessons that I took from the program: the need to build and maintain a circle of advisors. During this session, we did an exercise where we listed areas in which we needed mentoring and advice. As a postdoctoral fellow, I listed such things as scientific direction, writing papers and grants, technical help in the laboratory, and networking in my field. After developing our lists, we then identified individuals who could help us in these areas. I included a few of my postdoctoral colleagues, my husband (who is also a scientist), and my current postdoctoral advisor, each beside a different need.

Through this exercise, I immediately realized that one single person could not — and cannot — provide advice for every aspect of my career. Each person on my list had certain abilities (and time) to advise me in specific areas. During my days as a biology major at Furman, I had one advisor, Joe Pollard, who helped me develop my class schedule and assisted me in choosing a graduate school. When I began as a graduate student at Emory University in cell and developmental biology, I joined the laboratory of Grace Parlanti to study muscle development.

The graduate student-mentor relationship resembles your relationship with your parents, where you learn about multiple aspects of scientific training and cancer development. A scientific committee directed my progress in the laboratory, and I garnered additional career advice through interactions with other faculty members. However, these relationships tended to be casual and informal, as opposed to the ongoing, organized relationships that the Women Investigators Network workshops promoted.

When I joined the faculty of Tulane University earlier this year as an assistant professor, the lessons from those workshops suddenly came flooding back to me.

Facing with many new decisions and responsibilities — teaching undergraduate, hiring and managing technicians, students and postdoctoral fellows, organizing a laboratory — I remembered the list of mentors I had prepared during the workshop. I immediately began writing down the aspects of my new job where I needed advice.

One of my mentors at Tulane University is also a scientist, and he helped me develop a strategy for creating a balanced work life. A regular meeting, with set goals and time spent with our students, can help managers stay effective and productive. My mentor at Tulane University discussed his experience and the training he received through the workshop. He also helped me set a list of goals for the next year, helping me determine where I could grow as an administrator.

Through these meetings, I realize that many scientists who are not mentors have never thought about what it takes to be an effective mentor. A mentor may provide guidance, advice, or simply serve as a sounding board for a researcher. As a mentor, I strive to be open and honest with my students, providing them with the tools and resources they need to succeed. By actively seeking mentors and creating opportunities to share our knowledge, we can help ensure that the next generation of scientists has the support they need to succeed.

— JEREMY FLEMING

A 1998 Furman graduate, the author earned her Ph.D. from Emory University. Her specialties are molecular, cell and developmental biology.

Staying on track
Building on mutual respect

JUST IMAGINE! IMAGINE WHAT AN undergraduate can achieve! Imagine what an undergraduate can become!

Empowering others

Introduction to Computational Science: Modeling and Simulation for the Sciences was published in 2006 by Princeton University Press. As partners and colleagues, we have experienced the excitement of learning new things, making connections among disciplines that have often been too isolated, helping others develop their own computational science programs and, in particular, empowering undergraduates to participate in a revolutionary new field — and imagining what they can achieve.

— ANGELA BUZZETT SHUFLET

The author earned her doctorate from Vanderbilt University. She is the Larry H. McCalla Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science at Wofford.
Shortly after David Shi announced May 13 that he would retire as president of Furman at the close of the 2009-10 academic year, university trustees formed a committee that will play a leading role in selecting the next president.

The university’s new leader, they acknowledge, will have large shoes to fill, as during the 15 years of the Shi administration Furman has solidified its stature as one of the nation’s finest liberal arts colleges.

Under Shi’s direction the university has moved to the national forefront in such areas as engaged learning, energy conservation and environmental stewardship. Since he assumed as engaged learning, energy conservation and moved to the national forefront in such areas liberal arts colleges.

Solidified its stature as one of the nation’s finest 15 years of the Shi administration Furman has played a leading role in selecting the next president. University trustees formed a committee that will provide direction for the presidential search.

Trustee Richard Callen ’71 chairs the committee. He is joined by six other trustees — McKinney, David G. Elliston ’72, Angela Walker Franklin ’81, Carl F. Kohut ’63, Richard W. Riley ’54, and Baxter M. Wynn — and former board member William B. Hewes ’79. Elliston, Kohut and Hewes are past chairs of the board.

Professors Brian Gross (chemistry), Kailash Khandke (economics/Asian Studies and assistant dean for study away and international education) and faculty chair Suzanne Summers (business and accounting) are also on the committee.

Other members are Connie Carson, vice president for student life; Clare Polk-Menne ’83, president of the Alumni Association Board of Directors; Carl F. Kohrt ’65, president of the Furman administration in 1993 as vice president for academic affairs and dean. He had spent the previous 17 years at Davidson College, where he was the Francis W. Johnson Professor of History. He holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Virginia.

A widely read newspaper columnist and essayist, he is the author of several books, including The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture (1985) and Facing Facts: Realism in American Thought and Culture (1996). He is co-author of the best-selling textbook America: A Narrative History.

In 2006-07 he chaired the board for the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. He is currently a member of The Chronicle of Higher Education/New York Times Higher Education Cabinet and is on the board of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. He is also a board member of Second Nature, the non-profit organization responsible for administering the Presidents’ Climate Commitment. He received a Presidential Leadership Award from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in 2003.

For a list of highlights of David Shi’s tenure at Furman, visit www.furman.edu/president.

For additional information about the presidential search and how you can provide nominations, visit www.furman.edu/newpresident.

Compiled by Jim Stewart from reports by Vince Moore and John Roberts.

With David Shi planning to step down next spring, Furman launches the quest for its 11th president.
The French philosopher Voltaire is often credited with stating, “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.” Although Voltaire never used those precise words, few would dispute his broader point: Freedom of speech is crucial for intellectual inquiry and debate. Indeed, the spread of knowledge itself cannot occur without free speech. Freedom of speech, however, is rarely unlimited. Even on college campuses — institutions where pursuit of truth demands openness to virtually every viewpoint — ill-chosen words can sometimes stifle instead of promote dialog. Because such an outcome would defeat the central purpose of higher education, academic communities should regularly review how they discuss important issues. Furman’s Constructive Disagreements Task Force (CDTF) did just that during the winter and spring of 2009.

Reactions to two events in particular provided the impetus for the creation of the task force. In the spring of 2007, the Furman University Student Activities Board (FUSAB), the Residential Life Council and the student group Encouraging Respect of Sexualities (EROS) funded an appearance by the Kinsey Sicks, a cappella group of four men who perform bawdy satirical songs in drag (women’s clothing). Another Furman group, Conservative Students for a Better Tomorrow (CSBT), launched a petition objecting to the use of student fees to bring the Kinsey Sicks to campus. In response to CSBT’s petition, more than 60 faculty signed their own petition, which asserted that withdrawing funding for the Kinsey Sicks would be a form of censorship. Within two weeks of these developments, more than 11,000 words had been posted on a discussion board on FUnet, Furman’s internal Web site, about the evolving controversy. Students and faculty hurled charges and counter-charges between and among one another. Some claimed that it was wrong to use students’ money to sponsor what they considered a “politically motivated” group that was “hostile” toward Christianity, while others — without endorsing defamation or libel — insisted that free speech would be meaningless if Furman funded only non-controversial events. Ultimately, funding was not rescinded, and more than 1,400 people attended the Kinsey Sicks’ performance in McAlister Auditorium. Bitter feelings nonetheless lingered on both sides.

A year later, Furman announced that President George W. Bush had been invited to speak at graduation. A group of faculty responded by drafting and circulating a letter titled “We Object” that criticized various actions taken by the Bush administration. The letter was posted on Furman’s external Web site, www.furman.edu. CSBT immediately objected to the faculty letter and received permission to add its own statement, “Support Our Seniors,” to the Web site. As with the Kinsey Sicks, the most acrimonious discussions about Bush’s visit took place on FUnet. The exchanges soon created their own controversy, primarily because some faculty were troubled by what they believed were belligerent postings. Elsewhere, The Chronicle of Higher Education published an article about the student-faculty feud that generated more than 200 on-line comments, including some from Furman alumni.

Back on campus, several educational programs were conducted that focused on the Bush administration’s record; community members protested on Furman Mall prior to Commencement; and 14 faculty stood in silent protest during Bush’s remarks. Rancor remained even after Commencement, with a follow-up FUnet article generating more than 60 heated postings.

The imbroglios over President Bush and the Kinsey Sicks left many on campus feeling demoralized and dispirited. In the space of just a year, two relatively innocuous events had precipitated an outpouring of vituperation and accusations. Meanwhile, other visitors to campus, such as conservative pundit Ann Coulter and liberal firebrand James Carville, generated similarly heated if less extensive discussions. Some at Furman began to worry that, if the tone and conduct of campus discussions about controversial or inflammatory issues remained unexamined, future conflicts might produce even greater — and potentially long-lasting — enmity. With this concern in mind, Tom Kazee, the university’s provost and executive vice president, created the Constructive Disagreements Task Force in the fall of 2008. Composed...
recommendations of the CDTF

The Constructive Disagreements Task Force was charged with formulating recommendations to promote civil and constructive discussions and debates of issues deemed important by the Furman community. The results of its deliberations:

1. The university’s rules, policies and other guidelines for students, faculty and staff should explicitly respect race, religion, homophobia, harassment and harassment. While acknowledging that religious and other cultural norms may provide grounds for objection to others’ beliefs and practices, university policies should be clear that such objection to others’ beliefs and practices is no excuse for intimidation, harassment or ad hominem attacks. Such policies may play an important role in ensuring that objections should be framed in ways that promote tolerance of others’ rights to practice their beliefs, even or especially when one does not agree with them.

2. First-year Orientation should reflect Furman’s Statement of Character and Values (www.furman.edu/personnel/vpaa.htm). In particular, Orientation should not sponsor events that marginalize certain students, but instead create an environment that fosters and celebrates diversity and difference.

3. The university administration (the president and/or provost) should issue timely and decisive responses to any incident or issue that seems intended to make members of the university community feel unsafe or otherwise unwelcome. Such responses should be grounded in Furman’s Statement of Character and Values.

4. There should be consistent enforcement of Cultural Life Program policies requiring a commentator, moderator and/or faculty sponsor and/or moderator has the ability to terminate behavior during that event is disrespectful or otherwise inappropriate.

5. CLP events should, whenever possible, be organized in response to urgent issues generating significant concern or distress on campus. Proposers, sponsors and the CLP committee should act quickly on such proposals, recognizing that the four-week deadline for proposals can be waived for a two-thirds vote of the committee.

A. Scott Henderson is an associate professor of education. He served as chair of the CDTF and is a former president of the South Carolina Conference of the American Association of University Professors.
A trip to Carter Country

I never really understood why Furman insisted on calling the new Maymester a “May Experience” — until I had the opportunity to take a course for myself. After my three weeks in Helen Lee Turner’s class titled “Jimmy Carter and Southern Baptists,” I came to fully appreciate the meaning of “May Experience.”

As spring semester wore on and the plans for the course began to solidify, I grew more and more excited to learn about what our small class of nine students would be doing. Not only would we learn about President Carter and the ways in which his personal theology had developed and influenced his life, but we were actually going to meet the man himself!

Being the nerd that I am, I tend to be especially star-struck by “presidential sightings,” so I was more thrilled about this aspect of the class than any other. As if it weren’t exciting enough, Dr. Turner had one more idea that surfaced only a couple of days before we left for Plains, Ga., the president’s hometown.

She suggested that my mother, Charlotte Evans Finnegan ’86 (a former student of hers), come along for the trip. I had told Dr. Turner my mom was just that I was going to meet President Carter, so when I called with Dr. Turner’s proposition, Mom said yes immediately. So it was that on Saturday, May 9, we left Greenville for the five-hour journey to Plains.

The time passed quickly as our anticipation built. Early Sunday morning, we headed to Maranatha Baptist Church where President Carter would be teaching Sunday school. We arrived early so that we could have the best seats in the house, and we were successful. What an amazing experience! At 85, President Carter still has it all together, which was evident from his personal interactions with the congregation as he tried to get a feel for where everyone was from. His lesson was well taught and was followed by a traditional Southern Baptist church service.

After church, we were able to talk briefly with the president and have our picture taken with him. Later we ate the Carters eating lunch at a local restaurant, and he and Rosalynn once again spoke to us.

We spent the rest of the day exploring Plains and getting a glimpse into the former president’s life, past and present. We visited the farm where he grew up and the school he attended, as well as his campaign headquarters. On our way home, we stopped at the Carter Center in Atlanta and were able to learn more about his activities in such areas as diplomacy, social justice and Habitat for Humanity.

Upon arriving back in Greenville, our class commenced as would any other, and we engaged in in-depth discussions of President Carter and Southern Baptists in general. We learned about his core beliefs of advancing human rights and alleviating suffering are deeply rooted in his Southern Baptist upbringing and in such traditionally denominational principles as “priesthood of all believers” and “unity in diversity.” Yet one of the main reasons he cited in making the difficult decision to disassociate himself from the SBC after 65 years was that he no longer saw those core beliefs reflected in what he considered the rigid creeds espoused by the national convention.

Although the classroom work was educational and enjoyable, it was the trip to Plains and the personal encounter with President Carter that set this class apart from any that I have taken. It was by no means a typical class, but it is for that very reason that it is one of the best Furman experiences I have had.

— ELIZABETH STELL ’10

The author is a Spanish major from Fayetteville, Ga.

Three hundred forty-six students. Thirty-seven courses. Three weeks in May. Two hours of credit.

Such were the numbers for Furman’s first “May Experience” — or “May X,” as students quickly dubbed it. The optional program, part of the university’s revamped academic calendar, offers students (including members of the graduating class) the chance to devote themselves fully to one area of study while picking up two extra credits without the “distraction” of other courses.

It all begins the Monday after Commencement. Start date for 2010: May 10.

This spring’s May X program chose from on- and off-campus offerings in 20 academic areas. The eight travel programs included a trip to China to examine the country’s business practices, which with 21 students proved to be the first year’s most popular course. Among the other travel options were a service learning program in New Orleans to assist with the ongoing Hurricane Katrina cleanup, a geologic field study in the Appalachian Mountains, and visits to Scandinavia and Germany.

On campus, students delved into research methods and techniques in such areas as chemistry, neuroscience, psychology and biology, developed their own video documentaries, studied creative writing with novelist Bret Lott, and engaged in an in-depth examination of Dostoevsky’s The Brothers Karamazov.

Furman officials deemed the program a success and, given the rave reviews students offered, expressed confidence that its popularity will grow as word of mouth spreads.

History professor Lloyd Benson says he expects the May Experience to “create new kinds of course-related academic encounters

and former students of Dostoevsky’s

The Brothers Karamazov

studied creative writing with novelist Bret Lott, and engaged in an in-depth examination

and Southern Baptists.

Alyssa Richardson ’12 knows what it means to have financial need. For 2009-10, she would need to raise $3.9 million in additional funding from the annual operating budget, which is about 3.9 percent of Furman’s annual operating budget. But none of this would have been possible had she not received a Hollingsworth Scholarship.

To Furman, the Hollingsworth Scholarship is just one example of how financial aid in the form of institutional awards or state and federal assistance helps students. Currently, 24 percent of Furman students receive financial aid through a program called “Students for Students,” which supports students experiencing extraordinary hardships caused by the economic downturn. This program links donors and students by providing additional financial support to help students remain at Furman. It seems appropriate and right that, as an alumna, I should now give back by helping to provide similar assistance for current students.

“Giving Opportunities” tab.

Endowed scholarships

Furman offers many other scholarships based on merit, community service, leadership, or a student’s planned major. Says Bill Berg, vice president for enrollment, “When you endow an existing scholarship, it’s like giving on someone else’s behalf. Not only does it give an opportunity for students to learn how much financial benefit I received as a student, but I do understand that other people have helped me make Furman possible for me. It’s as though somebody will pass on the dollars so I’m not going to give.”

Many donors also endow scholarships in honor of memories of former teachers or loved ones. By doing so, they ensure that another person’s name will be associated in perpetuity with providing a Furman education for deserving students.

— LINDSAY TIMMERMAN NIEDRINGHAUS

The author is a freelance writer and 2007 Furman graduate.

An alumna’s perspective on annual giving

Furman alumni are a distinctive support group, even as tough times. In this Q&A, Kevin Spears ’82, volunteer chair of Furman’s Annual Giving Council, describes how philanthropy makes a difference at Furman and discusses his motivations for giving back. Kevin is a free-lance organizational consultant in Atlanta.

What drives your financial commitment to Furman? Why is it important to you to support the Paladins?

Kevin: I received a scholarship when I was a student. These funds were donated by people who had a real commitment to Furman. It seems appropriate and right that, as an alumna, I should now give back by helping to provide similar assistance for current students. Sometimes people say, “Well, I didn’t get any scholarships or financial aid, so I’m not going to give.” My response is that I don’t know exactly how much financial benefit I received as a student, but I do understand that other people helped make Furman possible for me. It’s as though somebody will pass on the dollars so I’m not going to give.”

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John Snyder, who joined the biology faculty in 1971, is the senior faculty member among the retirees. But you wouldn't know it by looking at him.

Department chair Joe Pollard says, “Like the fictional Dorian Gray, the real John Snyder never seems to age, and his teaching and scholarship are as fresh, active and current as ever. The idea that he might be approaching retirement is almost inconceivable to those who know him, and his colleagues find it difficult to imagine what the department will be like without his calm demeanor and dry wit.”

A native of Akron, Ohio, and holder of graduate degrees from the University of Michigan, Snyder focused his doctoral research on the isolation and characterization of anti-bacterial enzymes in the skin of frogs. Pollard says that, in hindsight, “This may be seen as an early manifestation of a lifelong fascination with some of nature’s less glamorous creatures, which subsequently came to include fruit flies and moths, among others.”

During his 38 years at Furman, Snyder taught everything from introductory courses to advanced classes in genetics and developmental biology, and he was known for his highly organized, exacting presentations. He chaired the department from 1985-91, and was praised for his fairness, consideration of others and of most importance to his colleagues, his ability to end department meetings on time. He has been at the forefront of developing Web-based tools to archive and retrieve images of insect specimens, and he has supervised the steady growth of Furman’s insect collection.

One of Snyder’s enduring legacies will be his work in developing the “Research and Analysis” class, a required course for biology majors since 1984.

“The goal,” says Pollard, “is to turn students into competent researchers. [B]ut unlike many so-called methods courses taught elsewhere, it does not simply expose students to a variety of techniques. Instead, students design and conduct original, cutting-edge research projects within the context of an undergraduate class.”

“Twenty-five years after it was introduced, the class is still challenging to teach, because it intentionally blurs the line between teaching and research. This is a perfect metaphor for John Snyder’s career, in which teaching and scholarship have been integrated and complementary activities.”

In retirement, John Snyder will have more time to spend with his family — wife Judy, an administrator; their children Erin Shelor ‘92, Ben ‘95 and Phil, all college educators themselves; and three grandchildren. He plans to end department meetings on time. He has of most importance to his colleagues, his ability to end department meetings on time. He has been at the forefront of developing Web-based tools to archive and retrieve images of insect specimens, and he has supervised the steady growth of Furman’s insect collection.

With the retirements this spring of John Snyder, Robin Visel and Long Xu, Furman lost three faculty members who were trailblazers in their individual departments. The retirements were, granted, amicable status by the board of trustees during its spring meeting. Furman magazine asked three faculty colleagues to comment about the retiring professors’ impact on their departments and students.

When Lynne Shuckledorf, chair of the English department, is asked about Robin Vital, she recalls two special gifts that were trademarks of her retiring colleague: an upbeat attitude and an adventureome spirit.

Shuckledorf, chair of the Department of the Arts and Humanities, served as president of the Furman chapter of the American Association of University Professors, taking meticulous minutes as faculty recorder or grappling with the complexities of how best to revise the curriculum. Robin maintained an infectious positive outlook and a zest for facing new frontiers,” says Shuckledorf.

Shuckledorf came to Furman in 1985 as the English department’s first colonialist. In that role, Shuckledorf says, “She helped to internationalize the curriculum for English majors, introducing them to literature from Canada, New Zealand, the Caribbean and India. She later developed a course in contemporary African literature.”

Of course, Jeff Heid ’91 recalls Visel’s “bright enthusiasm” and noted that she “didn’t hate the late night classes in the English department’s first courses in women’s and gender studies, and in 1991 she was one of the key planners of the first ACS Women’s and Gender Studies Conference — a conference that continues to be held every two years. But as impressive as Visel’s professional accomplishments are, Shuckledorf says her fondest memories are personal. ‘Robin and I raised our daughters together,’ she says, ‘so I was looking at the girls from the side, so to speak, as they went on to college and then later to graduate school.’

On the other hand, Shuckledorf recalls how Visel’s “intelligence and the way ideas presented in the often lengthy texts intrude into her routine. They integrate herself and all of us who were willing to join in the discussion.”

Visel’s international perspective was no doubt influenced by her years at the University of British Columbia, where she earned her graduate degrees. She has been invited to East Asia, South Asia, Europe and the Caribbean to present her scholarly work on colonial and postcolonial writers.

As a member of the Associated Colleges of the South (ACS) Global Partners for East Africa initiative, Visel also helped foster collaborative activities between American liberal arts colleges and universities in Africa. She traveled to Kenya and Tanzania to enhance her knowledge of East African literature, and she initiated a faculty exchange between Furman and Rhodes University in South Africa.

Visel was influential in developing the English department’s first courses in women’s and gender studies, and in 1991 she was one of the key planners of the first ACS Women’s and Gender Studies Conference — a conference that continues to be held every two years. But as impressive as Visel’s professional accomplishments are, Shuckledorf says her fondest memories are personal. ‘Robin and I raised our daughters together,’ she says, ‘so I was looking at the girls from the side, so to speak, as they went on to college and then later to graduate school.’

In 1988 Long Xu became Furman’s first tenure-track professor of Chinese. It was a time, says Shouke Yagi, Xu’s longtime colleague in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, when, unlike today, few people were interested in the Chinese language — or China in general.

“While pioneering the development of Chinese language and literature courses at Furman,” says Yagi, “Xu developed a study abroad program in conjunction with his alma mater, East China Normal University. Measured by the number of participants and their overwhelmingly positive responses, his program is one of the most successful in the country.”

Xu also helped introduce much Chinese cultural events as the Mid-Autumn Festival and the Chinese New Year’s Festival to the Furman campus, and he contributed to the growth of the university’s Asian Studies program by working to establish internship opportunities in China for students.

After earning his bachelor’s degree from Shanghai Teachers University, Xu taught English and Chinese in Shanghai for eight years. He completed his master’s degree in American and Chinese literature at East China Normal University, then came to America to study for a Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska.

A noted translator, Xu has published many translations of modern and contemporary Chinese literature into English. His anthology Recent Fiction from China, 1987-1988; Novellas and Short Stories (Edwin Mellen Press) garnered critical acclaim for illuminating how recent changes in China had been reflected in literature. He was also the editor-in-chief of the Macmillan Dictionary for Students in Chinese.

The focus of Xu’s work, says Yagi, has been to bring the cultural gap between China and the United States, and many of his professional presentations emphasize how to teach Chinese language, literature and culture to English-speaking students. His influence has been felt on both sides of the Pacific, as he has led several seminars for East China Normal University professors.

Yagi says, “Xu is famous for being an enthusiastic and effective teacher who is always well prepared. He will forever be remembered as the pioneer of Chinese language and literary education at Furman. He opened the path to today’s highly successful Chinese Studies program in the Department of Asian Studies, which is now one of the best in the country among liberal arts colleges.”

Compiled by Jim Stewart from reports by Joe Pollard, Lynne Shuckledorf and Shouke Yagi.
Furman backs veterans’ education

Yellow Ribbon program brings students of every stripe

Ryan and Megan Prewitt Koon aren’t yet 30, so they may be too young to have ever heard of “Annie Get Your Gun” or the song from the musical that serves as the title of this article.

President Lee C. Strobel has served as an Army Reserve officer, an ambulance driver, and a Peace Corps volunteer. He holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Virginia and a law degree from the University of Virginia School of Law.

Furman has agreed to pay $5,000 to qualified post-9/11 veterans to attend private institutions tuition-free, and to pay $2,000 to its own students who serve in the military. The school joined the Yellow Ribbon program, which was created by the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, to extend financial aid to students who are willing to serve in the military.

Furman, which had previously provided financial aid to veterans, now says it is willing to pay even more to help them.

The program went into effect at some colleges in the nation to join the initiative.

Furman is one of the first liberal arts colleges to join the program.

“We are taking advantage of the program because we think it is a very important initiative,” said Furman President Lee C. Strobel.

The program is designed to help veterans who have served in the military and also want to continue their education.

Furman has set a goal of enrolling at least 100 veterans in its undergraduate degree programs by the fall of 2009.

Furman’s participation in the program is voluntary.

Furman is one of the first liberal arts colleges in the nation to join the program.

In appreciation of Mr. G., students fund the trip of a lifetime

Pat Griffin had spent his 35-year teaching career telling students about the art treasures of Europe. He is a self-confessed Trekkie — which likely boosted his popularity among students — he told a school teacher. It doesn’t happen to anybody.

在未来的大楼上, 他将看到买尔・艾利・格里菲斯的《欧洲之旅》。他们甚至有一个网站。他们甚至有一个网站。他们甚至有一个网站。他们甚至有一个网站。他们甚至有一个网站。他们甚至有一个网站。他们甚至有一个网站。他们甚至有一个网站。
When The Woodlands at Furman retirement community held its opening dedication ceremony May 20, it marked both the completion and the beginning of a project that had been 10 years in the making.

Since 1999, Furman had envisioned the development of a community near campus that would allow retired residents, alumni and others with long-standing connections to the school to remain in university life. With the help of living, Texas-based Greystone Communities, Inc., the vision has become reality — and represents the first partnership in South Carolina between a university and a retirement community.

The $55 million Woodlands at Furman, whose mission is “to be the retirement community of choice by nurturing a distinctive culture of enrichment for our residents,” provides a variety of lifestyle options. It features 132 independent living residences, 32 assisted living apartments, 16 memory support suites and 30 skilled nursing care options. Independent living residents may choose from 12 different apartment styles, ranging in size from 717 to 2,060 square feet. Other on-site amenities include a fitness room, salon, spa and library.

While The Woodlands has much to offer to its 23-acre site, it also provides residents the choice to expand their educational, physical, mental and spiritual growth. Through the retirement community’s proximity to Furman — less than a mile out the back gate, off Old Roe Road — residents have easy access to campus events, from concerts and plays to lectures, football games, exercise facilities and programs sponsored by Furman’s Center for Lifelong Learning Institute. In addition, The Woodlands offers opportunities for ongoing interaction between Furman students and the residents.

Furman president David Shi said at the dedication ceremony, “The relationship between the university and The Woodlands makes so much sense. As I fondle freshmen on their first day on campus, Furman is all about nurturing a community to lifelong learning.”

And as Troy Conant, executive director of The Woodlands, said, “The relationship between Furman and The Woodlands will grow and develop. We are looking forward to having a close working relationship with the Furman campus on multiple levels.”

The Woodlands is also affiliated with the nearby Cliffs Communities, offering residents access to the Cliffs’ seven residential projects. As a not-for-profit entity, The Woodlands will funnel its revenue back into the senior living community and the surrounding area, re-investing resources to meet the needs of residents as they move through the continuum of care.

To learn more about The Woodlands, visit www.westcliffsandfurman.com or call (864) 315-1002.

FROM ALUMNI


According to the publisher, this education needs a book “that responds to the need for using technology in classrooms of tech-savvy students. This book is filled with imaginative examples of questions and teaching actions that use classroom response systems from a variety of disciplines (with a discipline index). The book also incorporates results from research on the effectiveness of the technology for teaching.”

Suzannah Rose ’96, David Buih and Douglas Wong, 100 Questions & Answers About Colorectal Cancer (Jones and Bartlett; second edition 2010). The publisher describes the book as providing “authoritative, practical answers . . . about treatment options, post-treatment quality of life, diagnostic procedures, and survivorship” for those coping with colorectal cancer. Rose, a Ph.D. candidate in the ethics concentration of the health policy program at Harvard, co-wrote the book while she was an oncology social worker at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Her co-authors are oncologic surgeons. Rose, a Foreign Policy Young Global Leader, was a graduate fellow in Harvard’s Safra Center for Ethics in 2008-09 and now holds a two-year interdisciplinary fellowship with the National Cancer Institute.

Andrew Farley ’94, The Naked Gospel: The Truth You May Never Hear in Church (Zondervan Publishing, 2009). The publisher says that in college, Farley “found spirituality and emotionally added to his life, and his understanding of the gospel. Yet despite his fervid behavior, he knew something was missing. That something was an understanding of the gospel that is stripped of the compromises and cliches of the modern church.” In his book, Farley, now a professor of applied linguistics at Texas Tech University and pastor of Lubbock Bible Church, addresses those issues. Steve Arterburn, chair of New Life Ministries’ The Naked Gospel: a “great textbook” on how to strip away all the religious jargon and take the challenge to just be a normal person while being a healthy Christian.”

Bill Foster ’87, Meet the Skeptic (Higher Work Press, 2005). Designed to create meaningful dialogue between believer and skeptic, Meet the Skeptic is a new model for making the Christian faith relevant to those with other world views. It reduces a skeptic’s many complex objections to four basic categories and illustrates philosophical arguments with powerful visual aids. Understanding the skeptic’s categories as argumentation by language, believers can more effectively clarify the skeptic’s world-view and share their own. Visit www meettheskeptic.com.

Mary Beth J.M. ’97, Fast Letters From Afar: The True Story of Eliza Jones, an American Nurse and Japanese POW (CliffsNotes North- west Books, 2009). When Eliza Jones agreed to go to the remote Alaskan island of Attu to teach with her sister, she said she would stay one year. But during that year, the publisher says, “she met a man and fell in love, and together they spent the next 19 years teaching in remote Alaskan villages.” Everything changed, however, in 1942, when the Japanese invaded the island. She was captured and taken to Japan, where she was held as a prisoner of war until 1945. She was the first white woman taken as a prisoner from American soil since the War of 1812. Buih, Eliza Jones’ great-niece and a retired first-grade teacher in Anderson County, S.C., used letters, Jones’ unpublished manuscript and extensive research to compile her own woman’s courageous story.

Jerry Belvin ’92, Your Life’s Great Purpose (Westin Press, 2008). The author, a retired newspaper editor, lives in Lexington, S.C., where he is a community leader and motivational speaker. He says this book is meant “to help anyone, especially people who have doubts about their lives and future.” Nobi Qubrin, president of High Impact University, says the book “will lift you to new heights in your personal and professional life.” Belvin hopes to see the proceeds from the book go to funds for literacy education and for research into learning disabilities. His ambitious goal is to sell 20 million books and raise $200 million.

FROM FACULTY

James Guth, Corwin Smidt and Lyman Kellstedt, editors, The Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics (Oxford University Press, 2010). “Over the past three decades, the study of religion and politics has gone from being ground by the scholarly community to being a major focus of research,” says the publisher.

“Yet, because this important research is not easily accessible to nonspecialists, much of the analysis of religion’s role in the political arena that we read in the media is greatly simplified.” In this volume of essays, the editors attempt to ‘bridge that gap by examining the consid- erable research that has been conducted to this point and assessing what has been learned, what remains uncertain due to conflicting research findings, and what important questions remain largely unanswered by current research endeavors.” Guth is William R. Kemn, Jr., Professor of Political Science at Furman, Smith is Paul B. Henry Professor of Political Science and Director of the Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics at Calvin College, and Kellstedt is professor emeritus of political science at Wheaton College.

Renee Schmidt and Paul Thomas, 21st Century Literacy: If We Are Scripted, Are We Literate? (Lippincott, 2008). The authors, colleagues in the education department at Furman, have produced a book that, in the publisher’s words, “offers a call to all who are involved with literacy education to reconsider the prescriptions that hinder good and effective approaches to literacy instruction.” Schmidt and Thomas bring their classroom teaching experiences . . . and along with their research base to a discussion of literacy opening elementary through high school” as they seek “to empower both teachers and students seeking growth beyond the limits that plague twenty-first century commitments to accountability and testing.”
It didn’t quite reach the level of Rodney Dangerfield’s familiar lament, but Furman’s Melissa Liebschwager definitely wasn’t feeling the respect when she showed up in Detroit April 2 to compete in ESPN’s 21st Annual College Basketball 3-Point Shooting Championship.

Here’s Liebschwager’s top 3-point shooter during the 2008-09 season, hitting 47 percent of her shots from beyond the arc, but the other contestants from the country’s major conferences didn’t quite know what to make of her.

“What conference is Furman in and how do you spell your last name?”

It helped that she didn’t have much time to be nervous. She learned only a week before she was invited to join the competition. The whole day before and the day of the competition, I was really nervous,” she says. “But as soon as I got out on the floor, I felt a lot more comfortable. I was in my element.”

Her performance demonstrated as much. The contestants were required to shoot a number of 3-point shots from different spots on the floor in rapid-fire succession, with 20,000 people watching and a TV camera a few feet away. So a good case of nerves would likely show up in a hurry. But Liebschwager was nearly perfect in the first round, not only obliterating her competition but appearing to have the time of her life while doing it.

“Everybody was nice enough,” Liebschwager says, “but I could tell they believed I couldn’t make it. It didn’t feel much pressure,” she says. “Nobody expected me to win, so I just went out there to enjoy myself. But it wasn’t like I didn’t expect to perform well. I had been making 3-point shots for a long time, and I was confident I could keep doing it.”

She was named Furman’s Female Athlete of the Year and the fourth Furman women’s basketball player in history to win the award.

The honor capped a remarkable four-year stint in Memphis who graduated in May with a double major in biology and health and exercise science, finished her senior season at Furman on a strong note.

In the first round, not only obliterating her competition but appearing to have the time of her life while doing it.

Her 47 percent average from 3-point range set a Furman season record, and she ranked among the Southern Conference leaders in scoring (127), minutes played (36.7), assists (3.2), assist/turnover ratio (12.7), blocked shots (3). She was named Furman’s Female Athlete of the Year and the fourth Furman women’s basketball player in history to win the award.

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Performance demonstrated as much. The contestants were required to shoot a number of 3-point shots from different spots on the floor in rapid-fire succession, with 20,000 people watching and a TV camera a few feet away. So a good case of nerves would likely show up in a hurry. But Liebschwager was nearly perfect in the first round, not only obliterating her competition but appearing to have the time of her life while doing it.

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There was a grand funeral held in Daniel Chapel on Furman’s campus May 16. It was for the president of the Alumni Association — Randolph Williams Blackwell Jr., who died May 13 after a brief illness. Just a few weeks before, Randy had spoken with the board of trustees at its spring meeting, saying his years’ activities had finally been in my office to plan our fall meeting. I was excited about finding volunteers to work in the organic garden near 36B Cottage, the Southern Living sustainable home.

Randy was the quintessential alum. He was from a great Furman family. His father was Gordon W. Blackwell, eighth president of Furman. Both of Randy’s children are alumni, and so is his son, Frank, also serves on the Alumni Association Board of Directors. Two of his three siblings are alumni, and his late brother Gordon had the unique ability to make you feel that you were one of his closest friends. He had hundreds of them. His positive attitude and enthusiasm made people feel good. As the president of the Alumni Board, his goal was to help furman alumni, but especially the Alumni Board, know more about the wonderful things going on at Furman, from Asian Studies to sustainability to athletics to admissions. He had a passion in his business in Indiana, Ind., it is dedicated to providing unpaid internships for students and children afflicted with Down’s syndrome.

In fitting tribute to Randy, the farm stand that sells produce from the university’s organic garden has been named in his honor. As Angelia Hallace ’91, Randy’s daughter of sustainability, says, “Randy planted the first plant in the new organic garden in 2008, and he has been a tireless advocate for our sustainability efforts. His enthusiasm, knowledge, energy, friendliness, and welcoming and open nature have been particularly appreciated by Furman’s Center for Sustainability. “His ideas and support for our efforts to reach out to the community about sustainable practices and ways of thinking have been a model for our students and at the Furman family.” His tireless desire to support the organic garden has fueled Furman make great strides in sharing the message of sustainability in real and lasting ways with our students and the greater community. Randy will be sorely missed.”

But Randy would not want us for mourning for him. Instead, we should honor his memory by getting excited about all of the great things happening at Furman now. The best tribute to him would be for all alumni to capture a bit of his enthusiasm by participating in the annual fund, attending an athletic event, telling a high school student about Furman, volunteering to help on campus, or hosting an alumni event. The possibilities are endless as Randy Blackwell’s love for Furman! Memorials may be made to the Randy W. Blackwell Memorial Fund at Furman, 3130 Poinsett Highway, Greenville, SC 29613.

41 Elizabeth Scarborough Musco of BrianWardinNYC, IV, was Elected May 1 by the Louis August Jones Foundation for her community leadership and service. The memorial fund, held at the Hartmann and Club in New York City, was part of a benefit for the foundation and for Camp Flying Sun, with which Lewis has long been associated. The camp is an eight-week international, full-scholarship leadership program for gifted and talented students from more than 30 countries. The foundation also recognized Mr. Musco for his civic and philanthropic endeavors. Among many other contributions, he was founding president of the Day Care Center of the Tarrytowns, which is named in her honor. She is a founder of Abbott Hall, which assists abused, neglected and abandoned children and their families, and was a member of the citizens’ committee that led to the establishment of the Foundation for the Family Court System in New York’s Westchester County.

42 On June 10, Delta Air Lines dedicated its newest Boeing 777-300ER aircraft to former company CEO David C. Garrett, Jr., in his honor. The aircraft’s flightdeck is named in honor of Garrett, who was Delta’s president in 1971 and CEO in 1978. In 1983 he was named chair of the company’s board of directors and served in all three of those positions until he retired in 1987. He remained on Delta’s board until 2001.

45 John T. James, another of those larger-than-life people you rarely meet in your lifetime. He bribed with bonhomie (so appropriate to a Furman — right?) and you couldn’t help but be back in the glow of his fast-talk, full-throt enthusiasm.

“His leadership and devotion to Furman and our board will be greatly missed. He will be a hard act to follow.”

For the past two years, the board of directors of Delta Air Lines dedicated its newest Boeing 777-300ER aircraft to former company CEO David C. Garrett, Jr., in his honor. The aircraft’s flightdeck is named in honor of Garrett, who was Delta’s president in 1971 and CEO in 1978. In 1983 he was named chair of the company’s board of directors and served in all three of those positions until he retired in 1987. He remained on Delta’s board until 2001.

44 likes to write about it. He was an ambassador for alma mater in so many ways. “It is hard to find the words to express how saddened I am over Randy’s death. I developed a deep sense of admiration and respect for Randy once I was elected to the Alumni Board. He was so generous with his time and support when I came on the board, and that support continued as we began to work together on the Executive Committee the past two years. He was a ‘feel good’ person in the sense that everyone has always been impressed by his true passion for Furman and his desire to make Furman a better place to live. Randy was one of those larger-than-life people you rarely meet in your lifetime. He bribed with bonhomie (so appropriate to Furman — right?) and you couldn’t help but be back in the glow of his fast-talk, full-throt enthusiasm.”

Joe Riley, previously vice president for television for the Mars-Peace Broadcasting Network, has become president and CEO of the Branson Valley Public Broadcasting Foundation’s board of directors. The foundation runs two public television stations: KCSVU and radio station KXBV-AM.

80 David A. Merletto, Jr. of Greenwich, a member of the firm of Merletto & Michalak, P.A., was selected by his peers in 2010 edition of The Best Lawyers in America in the areas of corporate law, employee benefits law, tax law, and trusts and estates law. He was also named a Super Lawyer in Corporate Council edition of Super Lawyers magazine. George Sington, author of two novels and four collections of short stories, is the recipient of a 2009 Guggenheim Fellowships, a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. The awards go to individuals who have demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or outstanding creative ability in the arts. George, who teaches creative writing at the South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities in Greenville, will receive the $40,000 award to work on his forthcoming novel Club Notes for a New Grove.
Bart Dredge, a partner at Dakota Ridge Real Estate Development and a managing director of the firm's lodging division, Johnson Capital Lodging Advisory.

Marcus Johns has been appointed in partnership with principal and chief operating officer of the Orlando, Fla., firm of NAI Horwath, one of the largest full-service commercial real estate companies in central Florida. From 2000 to 2007 Patrick was president of Orlando-based Intercontinental Distributors Inc., a sausage bite and stone distribution company.

Randy David Cook was the winner for the 2009 Alumni Award, which annually recognizes outstanding achievements in dance on Broadway and film. The award was presented during the 2010/11 season at the Florida Theater in Jacksonville, Fla.

Kendall John is a former Furman professor who is now chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Austin College in Texas, has been named a 2009 Piper Professor by the Mary Lou Piper Foundation.

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Homecoming 2009

In more than just coming back to alma mater. It's sharing the campus with family and friends, reliving memories with classmates and friends, and being in the midst of events that have been planned specifically with alumni in mind.

Classes ending in "4" and "9" will celebrate Homecoming and reunion this year is reunion!

MARRIAGES: Daniel Loffredo and Susan Grant, August 30. Daniel is an executive assistant to former U.S. senator and presidential candidate Robert Dole. Kent is vice president of strategy at Lichtenstein Martin headquartered. They live in Rockville, Md.


BIRTHS: Michael and John Steven 05, November 1. Michael received his medical degree from Barry University this fall.

Kathryn Stropp earned her medical degree from East Tennessee State University in May. She has been appointed as associate pastor of Earle Street Baptist Church in Greenville.

Courtney previously worked as the White House as a writer for President George W. Bush, then moved to Buenos Aires to do graduate work on South America. He is co-founder of GadZeus, LLC. They live in Norcross, Ga.

Karen Jones Kung and Stephen Rob Hartman, November 3. Michael received his MBA degree from Marylhurst University in May. He worked at the White House as a writer for President George W. Bush, then moved to Buenos Aires to do graduate work on South America.

Sarah-Ann Thomson has earned her doctorate in psychology from Nova Southeastern University.

Ashley Jackson recently received a Master of Science degree in clinical psychology from the University of Memphis. Maria-Koffie Mignon received her Bachelor of Science degree in clinical psychology from Nova Southeastern University.

BIRTHS: Ashley Jackson recently received a Master of Science degree in clinical psychology from the University of Memphis.

Maria-Koffie Mignon graduated from the University of Louisville Louis D. Brandeis School of Law in May. Her husband, Rob Mignon '05, obtained his MBA degree from Marylhurst University in May. He has been working at Farmers, Reiter and Associates in Orlando, Fla., and Rob will begin law school at Barry University this fall.

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Furman Alumni News

CLASS NOTES POLICY
Because of the large number of submissions and dropoffs Furman receives for the magazine’s class notes section and the time needed to review, compile and edit so much information, news items frequently are not published until five or six months after they are submitted. Furman Magazine does not publish items written more than 18 months old at time of publication or engagement announcements. When sending news for class notes, please include your spouse’s or child’s name, whether your spouse is a Furman graduate, and the date and city where the birth or marriage occurred. When sent electronically, news about alumni who graduated in different years is included under the graduation date of the submitted item in other cases it will go under the graduation date. It is not listed with both classes. Send news to the Office of Marketing and Public Relations, Furman University, 3300 Poinsett Highway, Greenville, S.C. 29613, or email to alumninews@furman.edu. Selected information submitted to the on-line alumni registry (http://alumni.furman.edu) is included in class notes.

MARRIAGES: David Robinson ’04, April 4. They live in Greenville, S.C.  
Katherine Piburn and John Botheier of Ohio.  
Kaye Brown, a flight nurse from Greenville, as a nonprofit organization.  
Andrew Sample.  
Katherine Piburn and Andrew Sample.  
DIVORCES: Lisa Stevens Gilford, a 1990 graduate and an associate professor at the University of South Carolina School of Law, was named a “Rising Star” by Alston and Bird’s Litigation and Trial Practice Group.  
According to Gilford, the NAWL, founded in 1899, is an advocate for women in the legal profession.  
commitment to diversity, recruiting and mentoring significant group,” says Gilford.  
American Radio Relay League and the Carolina Amateur Radio Club, as well as president of the Columbia Amateur Radio Club.  
“NAWL’s mission of advancing women in and under the law is personally important to me.”  
“Being a Furman alumna at the helm of the National Association of Women Lawyers, the nation’s leading volunteer organization devoted to the interests of women lawyers and women’s legal rights.  
During her tenure she has served on the executive board, help oversee the organization’s daily operations, and serve as the group’s principal media contact on women’s legal issues.  
According to Gilford, the NAWL, founded in 1899, has been a force in women’s suffrage movement and other women’s rights matters during the 20th century.  
It is an advocate for women in the legal profession while providing programming and support for women lawyers, law students and other professionals.

WOMEN LAWYERS GRAD TAPS FURMAN GRAD  
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FRANCES WERTZ O'BRIEN ’81, October 13, Virginia Beach, Va. She was a retired teacher in Norfolk (Va.) Public Schools, where she taught for 30 years. She was a member of the Norfolk chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta.  
Loulou Boul-Allamoun ’40, March 16, Greenville, S.C.  She was president of the National Association of Broadcasters in the states at Fox & Public Schools, where she taught for 30 years. She was a member of the Norfolk chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta.  
Napier Tedards Holland 1907, May 17, Augusta, Ga.  She was an assistant professor of psychology in the psychology departments of Whitten Center Ellington, S.C., and the Cowell Center in Kinston, N.C.  He was a ham radio operator and a member of the American Radio Relay League and the Columbia Amateur Radio Club, as well as past president of the national association of broadcast.  
A noted violinist, she was a member of the Spartanburg Community Concert Orchestra.  
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Dan Foster was one of a kind. His words and actions have enriched the lives of many. He was a master storyteller—whether spinning a yarn in the local paper or penning one for the Palmetto, South Carolina's highest civilian honor. He was a dedicated teacher and a devoted husband and father. His legacy lives on through his family and friends. To remember Dan Foster, consider making a donation to the Dan Foster Endowment Fund at Furman University. Your gift will support scholarships for students in the Furman community.

Gifts in Memoriam can be made by contacting the Office of University Advancement at 864-294-2510. Please indicate that the gift is for the Dan Foster Endowment Fund. Thank you for honoring Dan Foster's legacy.

Dan Foster was a true friend and a true gentleman. He will be missed by all who knew him.
Charles T. Goodson
'M58, May 1, West Columbia, S.C. He was a U.S. Army veteran.

Raymond Erl Campbell
'64, May 21, Asheville, N.C. He was a U.S. Navy hospital corpsman.

Evelyn Sanders of Greenville and Charles H. Townes '35 of Berkeley, a past member of the board of directors of Peoples National Bank, Southern Bank & Trust and Summit National Bank. He was a past member of the board of directors of Seaboard National in Greenville and was a U.S. Army veteran.

John R. McInney
'01, April 30, Greenville. He was a U.S. Navy hospital corpsman at the U.S. Naval Medical Center in Minneapolis from 1993 to 1995. He went on to work for Hess (now Hess Brands in Maitland, Fla.), retiring as a division manager.

Charles Robert “Robbie” Sharp
'62, May 11, Dawsonville, Ga. He built and flew straight-axle airplanes and was an entrepreneur whose most recent venture was Sharp Signs in Dawsonville.

Jennifer Lynn “Jenn” Stefanik
'88, April 2, Blythewood, S.C. She graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1993. She worked with the South Carolina Advocates for the Elderly, served as the state Guardian Ad Litem program, and in private practice in criminal defense. She was also an animal protection activist and worked to establish the Cotton Branch Animal Shelter.

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Alva Eugenia Lee Kennedy
'71, April 19, Greenville. She worked in civil service for 34 years, working with children, adult protective services, and adult protective services. She retired in 2005.

Mary Sue Taggart
'85, April 2, Blythewood, S.C. She graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1993. She worked with the South Carolina Department of Administration and served on the Medical Ethics Committee at Danville Regional Medical Center. She served the state’s elementary schools, all in Virginia. She was a member of the American Society of Anesthesiologists and the American Society of Anesthesiologists for Women in Anesthesiology.

Mike McConnell
'73, January 6, Dallas, Texas.

Edwin Jerry Massengale
'71, April 19, Greenville. He was a U.S. Navy hospital corpsman in nearby Danville, Va. He was employed by the Cherokee County (S.C.) Department of Corrections for 11 years. He was interred at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

Rance Clayton Cobb
'71, April 19, Gaffney, S.C. He was a U.S. Army veteran.

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Mike McConnell, former Director of National Intelligence, was one of four alumni who joined the Furman board of trustees July 1.

McConnell, a native of Greenville and a 1966 Furman graduate, served as DNI under President George W. Bush. A U.S. Navy veteran and former top intelligence officer for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he retired as a four-star general in 2011, just after having served as the top intelligence officer for the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Persian Gulf War in 1990-91, a 4,000-kilometer journey across India designed to document and profile solutions to the climate crisis within the country. In the process Singh and his cohorts tested technology by driving the entire distance in specially designed solar-electric cars, made under the direction of the Rural Energy Project at the University of South Carolina.

John W. “Jim” King, Jr., MBA '91, March 30, Lexington, S.C. He started his military career as a medic in the U.S. Air Force, then attended Western Michigan University and entered the U.S. Army Infantry. During his career he taught in the ROTC program at Furman. He retired as a lieutenant colonel after 25 years of service. He was then employed as a community relations manager for the South Carolina Department of Corrections for 11 years. He was interred at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

John Phillip Allen
'44, March 30, Greenville. He was a U.S. Army veteran of Vietnam and was employed in the Department of Facilities Services at Furman. Tara Sue Tappage
'82, April 21, Blythewood, S.C. She graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1993. She worked with the South Carolina Department of Administration and served on the Medical Ethics Committee at Danville Regional Medical Center. She participated in mission trips to Russia and South America, was a member of the Furman Athletic Hall of Fame, and was a member of the Furman Athletic Hall of Fame.

Mike McConnell
'73, January 6, Dallas, Texas.

Edwin Jerry Massengale
'71, April 19, Greenville. He was a U.S. Navy hospital corpsman in nearby Danville, Va. He was employed by the Cherokee County (S.C.) Department of Corrections for 11 years. He was interred at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

Rance Clayton Cobb
'71, April 19, Gaffney, S.C. He was a U.S. Army veteran.

Jennifer Lynn “Jenn” Stefanik
'88, April 2, Blythewood, S.C. She graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1993. She worked with the South Carolina Advocates for the Elderly, served as the state Guardian Ad Litem program, and in private practice in criminal defense. She was also an animal protection activist and worked to establish the Cotton Branch Animal Shelter.

Jennifer Lynn “Jenn” Stefanik
'88, April 2, Blythewood, S.C. She graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1993. She worked with the South Carolina Advocates for the Elderly, served as the state Guardian Ad Litem program, and in private practice in criminal defense. She was also an animal protection activist and worked to establish the Cotton Branch Animal Shelter.

Alva Eugenia Lee Kennedy
'71, April 19, Greenville. She worked in civil service for 34 years, working with children, adult protective services, and adult protective services. She retired in 2005.

Mary Sue Taggart
'85, April 2, Blythewood, S.C. She graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1993. She worked with the South Carolina Department of Administration and served on the Medical Ethics Committee at Danville Regional Medical Center. She served the state’s elementary schools, all in Virginia. She was a member of the American Society of Anesthesiologists and the American Society of Anesthesiologists for Women in Anesthesiology.

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Mike McConnell
'73, January 6, Dallas, Texas.
PRAISE AND IRRITATION

I thoroughly enjoyed the article in the spring issue about NPR reporter Eleanor Beardsley. She expressed beautifully the differences in European living. Having lived five years in the United Kingdom in the ’70s, I always have trouble expressing to Americans the differences I felt living there. Her last paragraph summed it up: “People eat well, take a lot of time off and really seem to enjoy life and family. And it doesn’t seem to be linked to money.”

So true. I miss the European mindset.

I take issue with the not-so-subtle jab in the article on Furman’s golden anniversary about the class entering Furman in 1958. SAT scores of 992 back then meant LOTS more than the inflated SATs of today.

Did you guess the article hit a nerve?

— CARTER E. MILLER, JR., M.D.
Sunset, S.C.

NO MORE

Please take me off your mailing list.

The spring Furman magazine is disappointing.

• A Buddhist chiropractor — perfect. Do you teach science?
• Celebrate an NPR reporter — I’m sure her reports are as fair and balanced as NPR USA is!
• Promote “social justice” — A code word for “I’ll use your money for my justice.” Note: Compassion isn’t compassion if you use (force) other people’s money — e.g., Obama/Biden.
I guess just like America “isn’t a Christian nation,” Furman isn’t a Christian school. Disappointing.

— LAUREN OSCHMAN

REMEmBERING m ISS FRANKS

I was saddened to read about the death of Sadie Franks in the winter issue of the magazine.

Miss Franks was my mother’s roommate at Greenville Woman’s College and then my mentor and French teacher when I was at Furman. She made a major difference for me when I was in her class. I made mostly A’s on the assignments, but got a B- in the class because, she told me, I hadn’t done my best.

The next year, I got a 4.0 and later graduated with high honors. I took her words to heart, for she knew that, if professors have high expectations for their students, they will respond. That B- is, in truth, the best grade that I’ve ever gotten.

— KAREN RAMSWAY JOHNSON ’73

The writer is an English professor at Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis.