

Furman program to target public service

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Program named in honor of David Wilkins will create fellowships, endowed professors

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COLUMBIA — Furman University's Riley Institute has created a legislative program named in honor of U.S. Ambassador David Wilkins that will create fellowships for Furman students and an endowed professorship, school officials said.

The Richard W. Riley Institute, named for former Gov. Dick Riley, presented the first Wilkins Legislative Award this week to Sen. John Drummond, a Greenwood County Democrat and president pro tem emeritus of the Senate.

David Shi, president of Furman, said the program is designed to help develop an interest in public service.

"This effort is designed to excite, in talented, bright young people, the idea and ideals of public service, and to give them hands-on experience working in public policy arenas," he said.

Six to eight students will be named as legislative fellows, working as interns in legislative offices for 11 weeks while the Legislature is in session. They also will be involved in seminars on legislative affairs taught by Furman professors.

The endowed professorship will be in the area of South Caro-

lina politics and provide a scholar as a resource to develop legislative initiatives, according to the university.

Officials also plan an annual forum of state leaders during which the Wilkins Legislative Award is to be presented.

Wilkins, the nation's ambassador to Canada, came to Columbia Monday to present the award. The honor is given to a lawmaker who "best embodies the highest principles of leadership based on integrity, compassion, vision, civility and courage."

Drummond, 86, a decorated fighter pilot during World War II, served in the House from 1965-66 and has served in the Senate since 1967.

Wilkins, a Greenville resident and former state House Speaker, was appointed ambassador in June of last year by President Bush.