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Pride in Ownership

By Jim Stewart

The success of the Forever Furman campaign is the direct result of the dedication and commitment demonstrated by thousands of university supporters.

By all accounts, the Forever Furman campaign was a massive undertaking — and a resounding success.

Behind the leadership of Gordon Herring '65, chair of the campaign's executive committee, and Neel Hipp '73, head of the national campaign committee, Forever Furman achieved more than anyone could have dreamed when it began in early 1996. By the time the campaign officially ended on December 31, 2002, its list of accomplishments included:

- A total of \$200,491,388 in pledges and contributions from 33,000 individuals — 18,000 alumni and 15,000 parents and friends — and 2,000 corporations and foundations.

- Additions of more than \$33 million to Furman's endowment, which as of December 31 totaled \$208.5 million, and another \$72 million in estate plans, most of which will enhance the endowment once they mature.

- Almost \$16 million for new endowed scholarships, and millions more to enhance existing scholarship programs.

- \$37 million in annual giving over the campaign's run.

- Four new academic facilities (John E. Johns Hall, Herman N. Hipp Hall, Nan Trammell Herring Music Pavilion, Bryan Center for Military Science), the expansion and renovation of the James B. Duke Library, and three new athletic facilities (Timmons Arena, Irwin Belk Complex for Track and Field, REK Center for Intercollegiate Golf).

- Contributions totaling \$52.9 million from the board of trustees, \$2.3 million from the Alumni Association Board of Directors and \$26 million from the Advisory Council.

- Gifts of at least \$1 million from 45 donors who provided major endowments and new facilities. Benefactors Circle at Cherrydale will recognize donors at this historic level.

The chart accompanying this article lists specific projects and programs funded during the campaign. But what it doesn't show is the effort and dedication of a remarkable contingent of volunteers, 2,400

strong, who contributed not just their resources but their time and talents to build the university they love.

A team effort

Leighan Rinker, chair of the university's board of trustees and mother of three Furman graduates, invokes Vince Lombardi, the legendary football coach, in assessing Forever Furman.

"Coach Lombardi said, 'Individual commitment to a group effort — that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.' His words could describe the campaign, which was an unparalleled success because of the commitment of thousands of individuals . . . alumni, faculty, staff and friends of Furman."

Initially conceived as a \$125 million drive, Forever Furman received such enthusiastic response during its three-year "quiet phase" (spring 1996 to spring 1999) that by the time the university went public with its plans in April 1999, the campaign leadership and board of trustees had raised

the goal to \$150 million. Midway through the public effort, the goal was increased once again, this time to \$175 million. “Because of our constituents’ increased understanding of Furman’s needs and their record-breaking response, the dollar goal kept climbing,” says Rinker.

Rinker also points to another significant achievement: Forever Furman marked the university’s first major fund-raising drive that was truly national in scope. The efforts of the National Development Committee, chaired by Gordon L. Blackwell ’60 (see page 10), helped Furman set records for commitments by out-of-state contributors, with almost \$73.5 million pledged by 20,252 donors from outside South Carolina.

While Forever Furman funded a wide range of construction projects and the development of a variety of new programs, the heart of the campaign was the Furman Fund, which provides ongoing support for the university’s daily operations.

During the course of Forever Furman, 18,000 of 22,000 alumni of record, or 81 percent, made donations, for a total of \$37 million. In 1998 alumni achieved 50 percent participation in the Furman Fund for the first time, and they have reached that goal for five consecutive years.

Says David Ellison ’72, a member of the board of trustees who has chaired the Furman Fund Council for the last two years, “Most of the finest national liberal arts colleges don’t achieve 50 percent participation. In fact, the vast majority of colleges and universities can only dream of 50 percent alumni support. The Furman faithful should be very proud to have broken that barrier five consecutive years — and that pride begets even more support.”

One area Ellison considers especially encouraging is the support Furman receives from parents of current and former students. As did alumni, parents gave to the campaign in record numbers, including gifts totaling nearly \$5 million to the library alone. He says, “They realize that the actual cost per student is much greater than they are paying and that the value their student is receiving is even greater than that. To me it is a validation of what Furman delivers to see the voluntary financial support of these parents.”

Similarly, faculty and staff demonstrated their commitment by contributing in record numbers, surpassing their previous marks by more than 17 percentage points. As Rinker says, “This kind of commitment is a reflection of the sense of ownership we all feel as members of the Furman family.”

Is Furman now financially secure?

Yes . . . and no. The university’s financial underpinnings are stronger than at any point in history. Funds raised through the campaign are providing scholarships, salaries, programs and buildings. Yet one-third of the commitments are still in the form of deferred gifts that will benefit Furman in the long term but not in the immediate future.

A closer look reveals some harsh — and immediate — realities. Because of the sputtering national economy, students are requiring greater financial aid as parents lose their jobs. The university’s endowment has taken a 10.8 percent hit in market value this year, and investment income is down. Donors are also affected by the air of uncertainty and malaise that has prevailed nationwide for more than a year.

As a result, departmental budgets are being cut, and the call has gone out for increased alumni support. Gifts to the Furman Fund and Paladin Club this spring will be vital to the university’s financial stability.

In an address to alumni and parents recently, President David Shi noted, “This is the best of times, and it is the worst of times. It is a time of success and of challenges. In the coming weeks, when you are invited to join a gift society or the Paladin Club, please respond generously.

“Furman needs you now more than ever as we pass through this challenging economic period. With your help, we will continue to move forward to assume our rightful place among the leading liberal arts colleges in the nation.”

On the following pages are stories of individuals and programs who have had a direct influence on, or been influenced by, the Forever Furman campaign. Although their stories are different, their common bond is their Furman connection.

Forever Furman: Projects Funded

Scholarships

- Sixty-eight new endowed scholarships
- More than 7,000 gifts to enhance existing scholarships
- More than \$15.6 million in gifts toward endowed scholarships

Professorships/Faculty Chairs

- Carey Shepard Crantford Chair in Modern Languages
- Rose Forgione Chair in the Sciences
- Louis G. Forgione University Chair
- Herring Chair in Asian Studies
- William E. Leverette, Jr., Chair in History
- Walter Kenneth Mattison Chair in History
- Dorothy and B.H. Peace, Jr., Professorship in Religion

Endowments for New Programs

- Christian A. Johnson Center for Engaged Learning
- Center for International Education
- Center for Theological Exploration of Vocation
- NEH Endowment for Teaching in the Humanities
- Richard W. Riley Institute of Government, Politics and Public Leadership
- Maintenance endowments for eight facilities

Active or Completed Building Projects

- Amphitheater
- Irwin Belk Track Complex
- * Bryan Center for Military Science
- Cherrydale Alumni House
- * James B. Duke Library expansion/renovation
- Estridge Commons at North Village
- Furman Hall renovation
- Hartness Welcome Center
- Nan Trammell Herring Music Pavilion
- * Herman N. Hipp Hall
- John E. Johns Hall
- Organ for Charles E. Daniel Chapel
- REK Center for Intercollegiate Golf
- Timmons Arena
- * Younts Center

*Fund-raising still in progress

Family Tree

Both sides of Blackwell clan boast deep Furman roots

Gordon L. Blackwell '60 is the third generation of his family to attend Furman. His father, Gordon W. Blackwell, graduated from Furman in 1932, later taught at the university and eventually returned as president from 1965-76. Grandfather Benjamin, a Baptist minister, graduated in 1903 and gave the yearbook the name *Bonhomie*.

So it would seem reasonable to assume that in the Blackwell household in Raleigh, N.C., Gordon L.'s Furman roots run the deepest. But in actuality, the Blackwell with the strongest Furman lineage is Gordon's wife, Ceil Watson Blackwell '62.

Ceil's great-grandfather, Joel Towers Rice, a businessman in Belton, S.C., sent eight of his nine children to Furman and the Greenville Female College (later Greenville Woman's College). Among them were Ceil's grandfather, Leon Rice '05, and Rena Rice, an 1896 GFC graduate who would marry Bennette E. Geer, president of Furman from 1933-38. Ceil's uncle, Earl Rice '41, also served on the Furman board of trustees.

"When people meet us they always assume that Furman is my college because of my dad, but the Rice family goes back farther than the Blackwells," says Blackwell, a past president of the Alumni Association who now serves as a Furman trustee. "A lot of Rices have attended Furman through the years."

Gordon and Ceil are also doing their part to carry on the Rice-Blackwell tradition at Furman. They have endowed scholarships, are members of the Richard Furman Society and made several major contributions to the Forever Furman campaign.

One of their gifts will eventually endow the Gordon W. and Elizabeth L. Blackwell Professorship, named for the former president and his late first wife. Other gifts, designated for the expanded and renovated library, include the Elizabeth L. and Gordon W. Blackwell Atrium, as well as several reading areas.

"The library is at the very heart of the academic life of the university, so I felt it very appropriate that my parents be honored there," says Blackwell.

The Blackwells have also provided support for the Max and Trude Heller Collegiate Educational Service Corps (see page 26) and for the construction of Benefactors Circle, which honors donors of \$1 million or more to the university.



BECKY KIRKLAND

Gordon and Ceil Watson Blackwell have a remarkable record of service to Furman.

And the future bodes well for a continuation of the Blackwell tradition at Furman, as all three of the couple's children — Beth Blackwell Swartz '83, Celia Blackwell McCauley '85 and Gordon, Jr. '90 — are also Furman alumni. Beth is a teacher, Celia is in commercial real estate sales and Gordy owns two computer consulting businesses.

"We never pressured the children to attend Furman. We told them they could attend any school that accepted them," says Blackwell. "We were surprised that they all went to Furman, but we're glad they did because it helped us reconnect with the school."

Blackwell explains that after graduating from Furman, he lost touch with the university. But his enthusiasm for alma mater was rekindled through his children.

"I saw what a tremendous educational experience they each received. We saw it in their maturing," he says. "All of my children have been very successful in their careers, and we came to realize the importance of the individual attention they received at Furman."

A veteran businessman and entrepreneur, Blackwell, who earned an M.B.A. degree from Harvard University and has founded two successful development companies, says he appreciates Furman for another reason: its ability, as a liberal arts institution, to prepare students for success in today's rapidly changing, technologically driven economy.

"The world today is changing so quickly. The leaders of tomorrow have to be flexible and quick learners," he says. "A narrowly focused or specialized education does not provide a person with the tools needed to be a successful leader in today's business climate."

— John Roberts

Stephen Mitchell's favorite time of the year is Christmas, but not for the obvious reasons.

Sure, he enjoys the fellowship with friends and family, gift-giving and holiday decorations. But it's the Christmas cards that he looks most forward to.

Mitchell gets them from all over the world — India, Argentina, Russia and Africa. Holiday greetings from every continent have been received at his long-time home on Atwood Street in downtown Greenville.

The cards, letters and photographs are from former students who attended a college or university in Upstate South Carolina with the help of a Rotary International Scholarship. A 1961 charter member of Greenville's Pleasantburg Rotary Club, Mitchell was named chairman of the international scholarship program that covers the Upstate in 1962, a post he held until 2000.

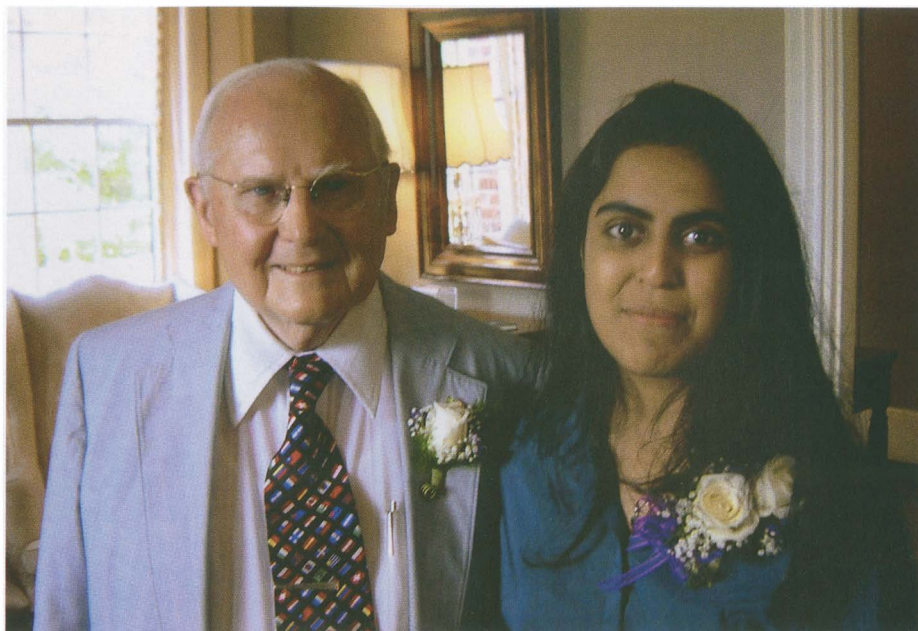
Mitchell, a lifelong bachelor, has poured much of his energy into the Rotary International scholarship and high school exchange program. He has evaluated countless scholarships, connected high school students with host families, and helped scores of international students realize the dream of attending college in the United States.

Mitchell also connects with the students on a more personal level. He is often the first person to greet the anxious teenager at the airport. He helps the student move into a residence hall and get settled. Throughout the school year, Mitchell remains in touch by taking students on weekend field trips or by hosting them at his home during the holidays. And he has heard more Commencement addresses than most university presidents.

"This has been such a wonderful experience for me," he says. "The young people are so enthusiastic. I enjoy being around them.

"I've been a bachelor all of my life and don't have any children. So I've tried to be a substitute father and advisor to the students that come over here. It's been very fulfilling."

Shortly after Mitchell stepped down as the scholarship chairman, members of the Pleasantburg Rotary Club decided to honor him by helping to establish a scholarship in his name at Furman.



Stephen D. Mitchell with Zarmeen Taherbhai, first recipient of the Mitchell Scholarship.

During the past three years, local Rotarians and Mitchell's friends at Saint James Episcopal Church and the Greenville Cotillion Club have donated to the fund. Employees at Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, the Greenville law firm where he worked for 26 years as office manager, have also contributed to the Stephen D. Mitchell Scholarship, which is to be awarded annually to a deserving international student.

Last June Furman hosted a ceremony at Cherrydale, the university's Alumni House, to honor Mitchell and to recognize Zarmeen Taherbhai, a junior from India, as the scholarship's first recipient. A chemistry major from Pune Nahrashtram, a small town in southern India, Taherbhai plans to attend medical school.

Mitchell first became interested in international education as a Navy officer during World War II, when he was exposed to cultures that were far different from any he had encountered during his upbringing in Charleston, S.C., as the youngest of 12 children.

"I was assigned to the Pacific campaign and had the opportunity to see Australia, Japan, China, Korea and the Philippines," he says. "Subsequently, I've had the opportunity to visit many times throughout Europe and Scandinavia."

Mitchell says international exchange and scholarship programs expand horizons, provide opportunities and break down stereotypes, and he points out that most recipients return to their native countries with a favorable impression of the United States. He says he is honored that a scholarship in his name will continue to provide opportunities to international students for many years to come.

"The idea is that if we get them over here, they will be your friend for life. And it works," says Mitchell.

— John Roberts

Belief, faith and action

Center's programs prompt conversations about what matters

Those of you who attended Furman in the 1970s may remember “Soup Group.”

The group was started by freshmen in a humanities course who wanted the lively conversations begun in class to continue. With the support of religion professor Albert Blackwell, philosophy professor James Edwards, and English professors Duncan McArthur and Stanley Crowe, among many others, the group gathered once a week for a simple meal of soup, bread, iced tea and cookies. Someone (usually a student) brought a “thesis” to the table and offered it to the group for discussion. Whatever topic had captivated the attention of the presenter — politics, ethics, theology, philosophy, literature — was fair game for the dialogue.

There was something special about “Soup Group,” and consciously or unconsciously, I have used it since as a standard of comparison for other groups. Sadly, I have not often encountered that rare combination of ingredients: critical examination of significant questions, multiplicity of perspectives, vulnerability and long-term interpersonal commitment. I hope that the Center for Theological Exploration of Vocation, funded during the Forever Furman campaign by a \$2 million grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., has begun to open the way for a “Soup Group” vision of community at Furman that is evolving across a broad range of programs.

To see the center’s impact for yourself, you might drop in on a session of the Lilly Faculty Seminar, led by religion professor John Shelley. You could hear physicist David Turner offer a scientific analogy to clarify some points about religious pluralism, or mathematician John Harris develop a literary metaphor. Later in the day, you might hear faculty share their personal “credos” or tell about their most transforming life experiences. On another day, you might find a musician, a political scientist, a French professor and others balancing on rocks in a creek to examine salamander habitats, or tromping through a marsh to look for an almost-extinct plant with biologist Wade Worthen.

Are important “theses” being presented and critically discussed from a multiplicity of perspectives in these contexts? You bet!

The “Soup Group” sense of community is similarly at work in the center’s international service-learning program. Groups



Street musicians taught Brandon Berry '04 a tune during his visit to Havana last spring.

of faculty and students have spent the last three winter breaks in Cuba engaged in intergenerational and cross-cultural conversations about the value of humanitarian service as vocation. Some of the travelers return with a significant change in their vocational direction, and others develop a new understanding of how their vocational inclinations fit into the world’s needs. Participants engage in serious talk about vocation — who, what, how and why — long before they travel to Cuba, and the discussions continue long after they return.

Other richly textured conversations about belief, faith and action occur during the center’s summer theology institute for incoming freshmen, now in its third year. During the two-week residential seminar, participants work with Furman alumni and faculty and with community leaders such as former religion professor Jeff Rogers, now pastor of Greenville’s First Baptist Church, and Ed Marshall, director of the Northwest Crescent Child Development and Family Services Center.

The students, from all over the country and from different faith traditions, share their quest for self-understanding through theological study, expressive activities and community service. Whether they are sitting in a classroom, surveying a landfill, shoveling mulch or making masks out of milk jugs, the conversation continues about what really matters.

Perhaps the best example of diversity-in-community occurs in meetings of the

center’s advisory council, composed of students, faculty, trustees, alumni and community leaders. This group creates a natural bridge from the academy into the community — an important vocational link. Plans are under way to form leadership teams to explore critical needs in the Greenville community and to propose projects that could be carried out with funding from the Lilly grant. These projects will undoubtedly create even more realistic conversations about what matters and how one ought to live in the world.

This is only a sampling of Lilly projects at Furman. Alumni will be the focus of future programs, because vocational questions and transitions are not limited to those making first-time career decisions. Through their actions and deeds, many Furman alumni prove that it is possible to find that place in life where, as Frederick Buechner puts it, “your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need.”

Together, we can continue to find ways to expand the Furman “Soup Group” vision of community.

— Elaine Nocks

The author is professor of psychology and co-director, with Spanish professor David Bost, of the Center for Theological Exploration of Vocation. For more information about the center and its programs, visit its Web site (www.furman.edu/lilly) or contact the center’s coordinator, Ann Anshus Quattlebaum '64, at (864) 294-2511 or at ann.quattlebaum@furman.edu.

New York state of mind

A United Nations internship expands a young man's world view

The United Nations Internship Endowed Fund was established in 1999 by Frances Cox Jones '45 of Spartanburg, S.C., after her granddaughter, Christine Lawson '99, enjoyed an outstanding experience at the UN as a Furman student. Brett Jones '02, author of this article, was the first student to benefit from the fund.

The UN program is part of a cooperative arrangement with Occidental College of Los Angeles.

How does one describe the best four months of his life? My time at the United Nations can be characterized as nothing less than spectacular.

In the fall of 2000, I was the first student from Furman to study with the Occidental College Semester of Study at the United Nations. The program itself was rather intense and consisted of two classes on human rights and security, an independent research paper and an internship.

Academically, we were exposed to some incredible things. Each day, we welcomed lecturers from the UN Secretariat who spoke on any number of issues. Speakers ranged from the UN press secretary to the former head of the Mozambiquan Air Force, who had by then taken a position as a disarmament expert.

Our internships placed us throughout the United Nations. Mine was at the United Nations Association, the nation's largest grassroots organization supporting the UN. From time to time I attended events sponsored by the UN or by affiliated organizations, such as fund-raisers and seminars on various issues facing the world.

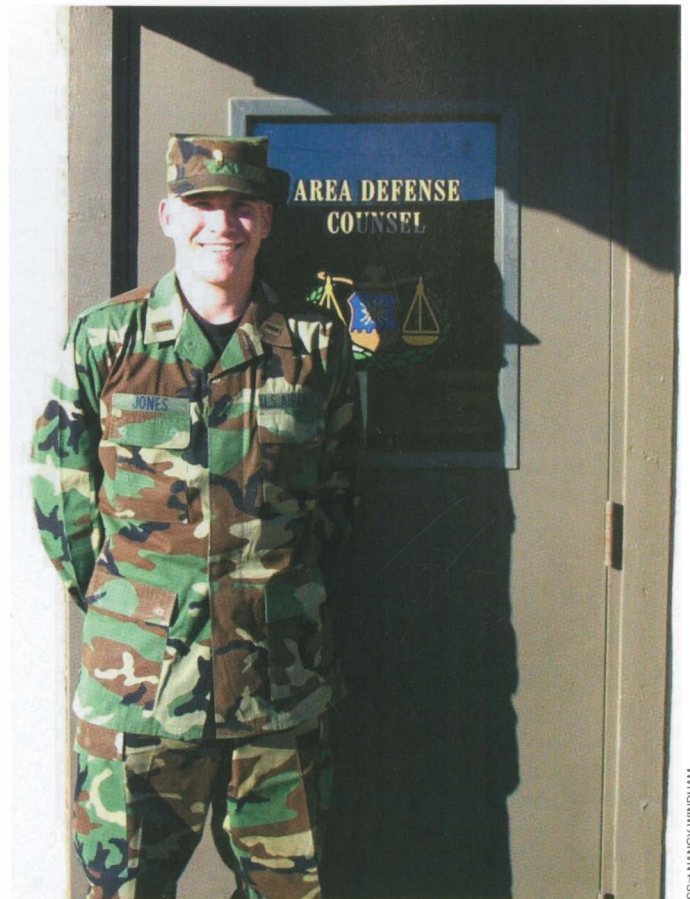
While I spent much of my time studying, my learning experience in New York was not limited to the classroom or to my internship. Every moment of every day was an opportunity to learn. My group of friends was extremely varied. Not only were they ethnically diverse, but they practiced different faiths and held different political opinions.

Amazingly, though, all were motivated by a desire to learn and a commitment to serving their fellow human beings. Even though we did not always agree on the ways to solve the problems of the world, we shared a mutual understanding and a commitment to making the world a better place.

It was this common bond that made the experience so exceptional. While the classroom lectures and the events within the UN were enlightening, I will never forget the conversations I had over dinner at Mee's Noodle Shop with Rali Badissy and Aaron Resnick, two friends who were Muslim and Jewish, respectively. Although our backgrounds were vastly different, we were able to agree much more than we disagreed. Nor will I forget the nights that we went out as a group to the Russian Samovar Room or to Greenwich Village to listen to live music. The friends I made during my time in New York were the best part of the experience, and I still keep in touch with them today.

New York was the perfect place for a diverse group of students to come together and learn about the world. The city itself is so much more than we see on television or in the news. It is the most dynamic and amazing place in the world, with its own pulse and its own energy. You cannot truly experience New York until you have walked down Second Avenue on a blustery evening or eaten a Hebrew National hot dog on the way to Central Park. It's the special nature of New York that makes it the greatest city on Earth. I hope one day to return and settle in the New York area.

Looking back, the most remarkable aspect about my UN experience was not that I had some great epiphany or some incredible revelation about life. It was that I became more firmly attached to my own beliefs. By experiencing new things, new people and new ideas, I was able to examine myself and my own convictions



See Brett Jones' UN diary at furman.edu/engaged/BrettattheUN.html.

more critically. In the end I realized that I was very happy being Brett Jones, and I realized that my faith and spiritual life are what make me the person I am.

Now, more than two years later, I am able to look back and see that my time at Furman leading up to my trip to New York had prepared me well for my semester of study, and that it was an incredible honor to represent the university as its first student in the Oxy-at-the-UN program.

— Brett Jones '02

A political science major at Furman, the author is a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force and is completing the Officer Intelligence Course at Goodfellow Air Force Base in San Angelo, Texas.