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Keys to Success

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Ruby Morgan has always sought a “purpose-driven life.”

During her decades as a professor of piano at Furman, she has worked tirelessly to make connections with her students and their music. Understanding and connecting with the composer, the musical composition, the audience and the piano itself also play key roles, she says.

It’s a gift that her current and former students treasure.

“Ruby has the gift of being able to seamlessly integrate practical issues of technique with the more emotional issues of musicality,” says **Emily Gertsch ’01**, now on the music faculty at the Hugh Hodgson School of Music at the University of Georgia.

In 1997 Gertsch found herself sitting between two Steinways on the couch in Morgan’s office. From their first conversation, she felt both comfortable and inspired. Since then, Gertsch

says she has gained not only a mentor, but also a friend.

“Ruby is a pianist, professor and person of grace and grit,” says **Sarah Saba ’17**, who earned her Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance and is now a first-year medical student at Wake Forest University. “She brings out the best in her students in a gracious, encouraging and yet demanding manner that inspires and challenges excellence.”

As her teaching career at Furman comes to a close next summer, Morgan has no plans to slow down. First, she is pursuing the publication

of an anthology of music for left hand alone, a repertoire she has championed. Second, she will continue her role on the board of trustees of the Brevard Music Center, which she attended as a student and later joined for eight summers as a faculty member.

Third, and most important, she has found a new purpose that she believes will enhance the piano performance program she’s worked so hard to build and maintain.

Starting with seed money she will contribute, Morgan hopes to replace most of the pianos in the Daniel Music

Keys to Success

Ruby Morgan leaves a tangible legacy for future Furman musicians.

BY ERIKAH HAAVIE

Building, making Furman an All-Steinway School for the first time.

“The majority of the grand pianos in studios and classrooms date to 1975 (the completion of Daniel Music Building) and some to the Woman’s College campus decades earlier. The pianos in the practice rooms are also aging and inadequate for our outstanding students, particularly our piano performance majors,” says Morgan.

“Becoming an All-Steinway School will allow Furman to join the ranks of many esteemed music programs in the country such as the Curtis Institute of Music, Yale School of Music and Cleveland Institute of Music,” says Gertsch, who teaches at an All-Steinway School. “More importantly, the powerful, warm and rich sound of Steinway pianos would enhance the musical experience for Furman students, faculty and the community.” ●