

4-1-2010

## Building Future Leaders

Jim Stewart  
*Furman University*

Jeremy Fleming  
*Furman University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine>

---

### Recommended Citation

Stewart, Jim and Fleming, Jeremy (2010) "Building Future Leaders," *Furman Magazine*: Vol. 53 : Iss. 1 , Article 4.  
Available at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol53/iss1/4>

This Article is made available online by Journals, part of the Furman University Scholar Exchange (FUSE). It has been accepted for inclusion in Furman Magazine by an authorized FUSE administrator. For terms of use, please refer to the [FUSE Institutional Repository Guidelines](#). For more information, please contact [scholarexchange@furman.edu](mailto:scholarexchange@furman.edu).



# BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS

Thanks to the legacy of John D. Hollingsworth, Jr., a major scholarship program is attracting more of South Carolina's best and brightest to Furman.

When Greenville businessman and philanthropist John D. Hollingsworth, Jr., died in December 2000, he left instructions that his extensive estate be converted into a trust fund — and designated Furman as one of the major beneficiaries of the income produced each year by the trust.

Hollingsworth, who attended Furman briefly in the 1930s, was an intensely private man who lived modestly and made his work his life. Under his guidance his company, John D. Hollingsworth on Wheels, became one of the world's leading manufacturers of metallic wire for carding machines, which separate textile fibers.

He also compiled extensive holdings in real estate and was reputed to be the largest landholder in South Carolina. At one time he was included on the annual *Forbes* magazine list of the world's wealthiest people.

Furman officials believe that Hollingsworth began considering including the university in his plans in the late 1960s or early 1970s through conversations he had with then president Gordon W. Blackwell, Robert E. "Red" Hughes '38 (a Furman classmate and former university trustee), and other acquaintances.

Shortly after John Johns became president in 1976, he learned of Hollingsworth's intent. "It was to be confidential, but I knew that it was going to be a very large gift," Johns said.

Hollingsworth's will stipulated that his estate — valued at his death at approximately \$290 million — be converted into a philanthropic trust called the Hollingsworth Funds, which would be run by a select board of directors.

Furman and Greenville County public charities would each receive 45 percent of the annual earnings from the Funds, with the remaining 10 percent going to the Greenville YMCA.

Hollingsworth's generosity made it possible in 2006 for Furman

to establish the Hollingsworth Scholarships — \$25,000 annual awards to 20 incoming students from South Carolina who show unusual potential for making a difference in their communities and in the world.

As Furman president David Shi said at the time the program was created, "Furman wants to encourage more of South Carolina's brightest students to remain in the state and take advantage of the quality education we have to offer. It is our expectation that the Hollingsworth Scholars will become future leaders in the state and beyond."

The scholarships are renewable each year as long as the students maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.70 or higher. Recipients are expected to live on campus for four years and become fully involved in the Furman community.

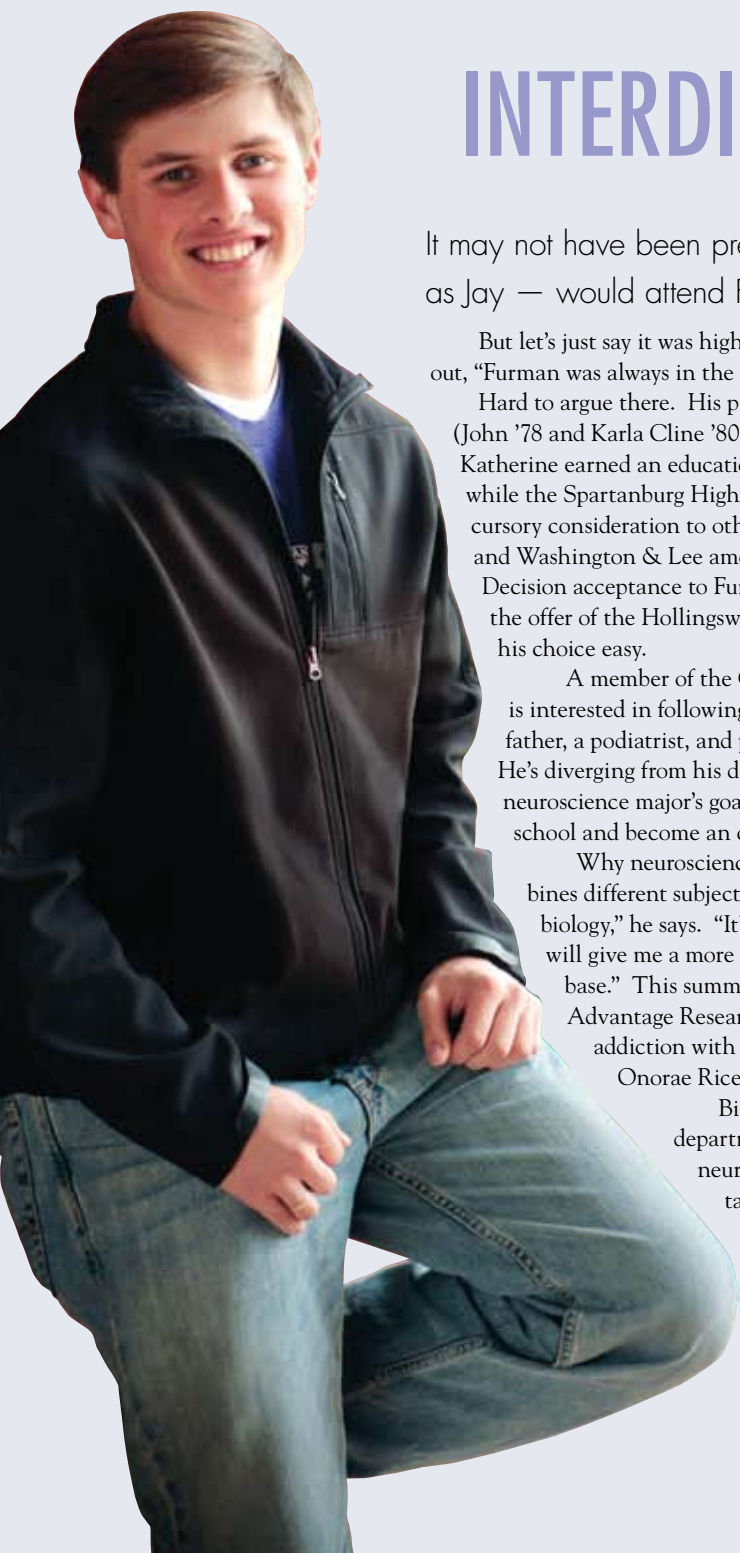
The awards also provide support for the scholars to participate in a study away trip, a summer internship or research experience, and seminars to foster community service. Selection is based on high school

academic performance, intellectual curiosity, potential for success, school and community involvement, leadership skills, and a recommendation from a community leader.

The 2009-10 academic year marked the first in which all Furman classes included Hollingsworth Scholars. On the following pages we profile a representative scholar from each class, providing an idea of the type of students who are using the award to make a difference in their lives — and eventually, in the lives of others.



John D. Hollingsworth (left) with Buck Welling, chairman emeritus of the board of Hollingsworth Funds, Inc. Furman awarded Welling an honorary degree last fall. Opposite: Hollingsworth on business in Germany, early '70s. Photos courtesy Buck Welling.



# INTERDISCIPLINARY INTERESTS

It may not have been preordained that Thomas John Patrick III — better known as Jay — would attend Furman.

But let's just say it was highly likely. As he points out, "Furman was always in the blood."

Hard to argue there. His parents are alumni (John '78 and Karla Cline '80 Patrick), and his sister Katherine earned an education degree in 2009. So while the Spartanburg High School graduate gave cursory consideration to other schools — Clemson and Washington & Lee among them — his Early Decision acceptance to Furman, combined with the offer of the Hollingsworth Scholarship, made his choice easy.

A member of the Class of 2012, Patrick is interested in following in the footsteps of his father, a podiatrist, and pursuing a medical career. He's diverging from his dad's path, though; the neuroscience major's goal is to attend dental school and become an orthodontist.

Why neuroscience? "I like how it combines different subjects — psychology, chemistry, biology," he says. "It's a good mix and I think will give me a more well-rounded academic base." This summer he'll be a Furman Advantage Research Fellow, studying addiction with psychology professor Onorae Rice.

Bill Blaker of the biology department, who heads the neuroscience program and taught Patrick this spring in the interdisciplinary "Brain and Mind" class, says Patrick's choice of major jibes perfectly with his strengths.

"Aside from being bright, personable, friendly and a good science student, one of the main things about Jay is that his interests and abilities go beyond just one field," says Blaker. "He's able to excel in more than one area, to see concepts that cross disciplines. And that's a big part of what Furman's all about."

Last summer Patrick was able to test his career interest through an internship with Healthy Smiles of Spartanburg, a non-profit that visits schools, churches and recreation programs and screens children for dental needs. "It's designed to find and help those who might otherwise fall through the cracks," says Patrick.

While shadowing the dentists and assisting with the exams, Patrick worked directly with the children by making presentations about the importance of oral health care, using a lighthearted approach to deliver a serious message.

Although he's pursuing a heavy academic load at Furman, Patrick has found time to become involved in a variety of campus activities. In addition to intramural and club sports, he's a member of Pi Kappa Phi fraternity and serves on the Student Alumni Council, which plans a host of programs for Homecoming and Founders Week.

During 2009-10 he was also parliamentarian for the Residential Life Council, whose role is to be a liaison between students and the housing department while working to improve residence life at Furman.

In that regard, Patrick hopes RLC can address what he calls the divide between Lakeside Housing (formerly the women's complex) and South Housing.

"The students in those two areas don't tend to know each other very well," he says. "We need to find a way to have more interaction between students on both sides of campus."



## PASSION MEETS CALLING

Azra Aslam thought she knew how her Furman career would play out when she arrived on campus in the fall of 2006.

She would pursue an art/premedical studies curriculum, go on to medical school and eventually work with a service program such as Doctors Without Borders.

After her freshman year, she got the chance to test her interest when she traveled to Kenya for six weeks as part of a medical mission team. But rather than confirm her plans, the trip made her realize that this career path wasn't for her, after all.

Not that the work wasn't worthwhile or fulfilling. It just felt a bit impersonal. "The doctors were seeing maybe a thousand patients a day," she says, so there was little time to provide much personal attention. "I came away thinking I'd rather try to give people a *reason* to live."

Although she remained committed to a career in service, upon her return to Furman she decided to switch from pre-med to political science. She continued with her art studies and even had an exhibit in her hometown, Columbia, of a series of paintings inspired by her African experience.

But until last fall, art was something she says she did simply because she enjoyed it: "I hadn't really found a way to connect it to my calling," she says.

Then she enrolled in "Women and the Arts." During the class, she did a project on micro-financing in which she learned how banks provide small loans to individuals — 95 percent of them women — in developing countries to help them start their own businesses. These women frequently are responsible for supporting their families, and micro-financing is designed to help them do just that.

Suddenly, Aslam saw a way to combine her dual interests. Many women, she notes, could use or develop their artistic talents in such areas as ceramics or embroidery to earn money, and given her artistic skills, she could help them. After graduation this spring, she intends to earn master's degrees in business administration and international development, then work in micro-financing.

Aslam, who is of Indian descent, was able to use her Hollingsworth internship to travel to Chennai, India, last summer and spend 10 weeks working at Olcott Memorial High School ([www.olcott-school-chennai.org](http://www.olcott-school-chennai.org)), which serves children from disadvantaged backgrounds. There she taught English and designed an art project — a mural — to help the students develop critical thinking skills.

A graduate of Airport High School, Aslam says she probably would not have come to Furman without the Hollingsworth award. Her father, who runs an import business, wanted her to follow her older sister and attend Columbia College in her hometown.

But doctors at Lexington Medical Center, where she had an internship while in high school, recommended Furman because of its pre-med program. A visit to the campus convinced her that "this is where I wanted to be," and the scholarship helped seal the deal. Now, she says, "Dad's OK with my decision."

Furman's course in "Beginning Hindi" also gave her a chance to improve her skills in the language her father speaks to her at home. "I could understand and translate it," she says, "but my vocabulary and writing were weak."

Now her more refined language abilities will likely come in handy as she works to provide greater economic opportunities for those who need them most.



## POLITICS ON HIS MIND

You'll excuse Ben Saul if sometimes he feels a little like a stranger in a strange land.

On a campus where the student body leans to the conservative side, Saul, a member of the Class of 2013, is unabashedly proud to proclaim himself a Democrat. He's campaigned for Barack Obama and gone door-to-door in his hometown of Greenwood in support of Floyd Nicholson's candidacy for the South Carolina House (he won). This summer he's set to intern with Frank Holleman — Greenville lawyer, member of Furman's Class of '76, and candidate for the Democratic nomination for state superintendent of education.

While Saul wears his credentials on his sleeve, he doesn't seem distressed or discomfited about being in the minority on campus. And he's also willing to give the "other side" its due.

"I've been a little disappointed with the lack of progressive speakers that have been brought to campus this year," he says. "The Conservative Students for a Better Tomorrow is the best-run student organization at Furman. They do a great job of bringing in provocative conservatives to speak, and they use their money well to get across their point of view.

"I'm hoping I can work to develop another group that will bring speakers who will help provide more balanced discussions and topics for debate for the campus community."

Saul, who plans to major in political science, could also find

himself in a semi-awkward situation this fall. One of the six Republican candidates (as of this writing) for the superintendent's position is Brent Nelsen, professor of political science at . . . Furman. Should Holleman and Nelsen win their June 8 primaries, they would set up a Furman showdown in the fall.

Saul laughs about the idea of taking sides in a battle between two Paladins, then points out, quite reasonably, that there's no reason to worry about it until he has to: "Neither one of them is officially the candidate yet."

Whether the next superintendent is Holleman, Nelsen or someone else, Saul will keep a close watch on the office. He hopes someday to enter state politics, and education policy is his primary interest.

The summer before his senior year in high school, Saul attended the Emerging Public Leaders program sponsored by Furman's Richard W. Riley Institute. There he watched the documentary "Corridor of Shame," which details the challenges and neglect faced by rural public schools in South Carolina. It had a profound effect on him, he says, and adds, "I'm a graduate of a public high school [Emerald], but I also attended private schools. So I've seen the disparities."

The Hollingsworth Scholarship, he says, was a major factor in his decision to enroll at Furman over such schools as Wofford, Davidson and Wake Forest. He's enjoyed the perks of the program, from the chance to develop his leadership skills and engage in service opportunities to special invitations to meet prominent visitors to campus. One example: Christine Todd Whitman (former Environmental Protection Agency head).

And he has his eyes on future internship opportunities, including Furman's Washington program and the Wilkins State Legislative Affairs Fellowship Program with the South Carolina legislature.

For someone who's thinking law school and politics down the road, such experiences would be a perfect fit.



## SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Since arriving at Furman in 2007, Shannon Cantwell has spent about as much time away from school as she has on campus.

She's traveled to Swaziland to participate in international relief efforts with the humanitarian group Heart for Africa, to Latin America on a study abroad trip, to Belgium as an intern with the European Parliament, and to the London School of Economics and Political Science for a research internship — all with the help of Furman programs ranging from the Hollingsworth Scholarship to the Furman Advantage.

This summer she's doing a five-week internship with the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa, after which she will lead four fellow student-athletes — David Barrington '11 (football), Ben Granger '12 (football), Jessica Pate '13 (cross country and track) and Raul Rodriguez '13 (football and track) — to Swaziland in late July for a two-week service project at the orphanage where she worked previously. (Learn more at [www.athletes4africa.net](http://www.athletes4africa.net) — the non-profit she established in conjunction with Heart for Africa.)

Oh, did we fail to mention she's a member of the track and cross country teams, a recipient of the Furman Bisher Academic-Athletic Scholarship and a six-time qualifier for the World Championships of Irish Step Dance? That she's an outstanding student with a double major in economics and political science? And that when she returns to campus in the fall — "I'm staying put next year," she says with a laugh — she'll be president of the Class of 2011?

There's plenty more, but you get the picture. Shannon Cantwell is a seeker and a doer, with a goal of attending graduate school in economics and public policy and pursuing a career in international development.

Her ambitions have been fueled, she says, by her undergraduate experiences. "Furman has provided so many opportunities that I don't think I would have gotten at a larger school," says Cantwell, a graduate of Wando High in Mount Pleasant. "Study abroad trips, international internships — it's been a blessing to receive so much encouragement and to work with faculty and staff who are eager to connect you with the right programs and resources."

Yet while she's spent much of her college career away from Furman, she's still found time to participate in athletics. In addition to cross country, she runs the middle distances in track.

"I'm a walk-on, and I understand my limitations," she says. "But I do it because I love it. Practice can be a real stress reliever after a hard day in class. Being on a team, you build great relationships. I've learned a lot about time management, and Coach [Gene] Mullin has been very supportive and understanding with my schedule and study away trips."

Right now she's finalizing plans for the Africa project, which she has organized and raised money for over the past year. She's proud that four other student-athletes are partnering with her.

While she'll no doubt demonstrate her dancing skills for the youngsters — she says they especially enjoy trying to mimic her movements — she adds, "The director of the orphanage emphasizes building a strong, well-rounded foundation for the children and exposing them to a wide variety of things. So we'll work with them in many different areas."

It represents an opportunity for Cantwell to model her commitment to servant leadership — and to share it with others. |F|