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# Return of the ring: restoring tradition

Tom Triplitt '76  
*Furman University*

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# Furman alumni news

## Return of the ring: restoring tradition

The Alumni Office often receives calls asking us to help find Furman graduates, but none are as satisfying as when someone has found a Furman ring and wants to locate the owner. Our latest successful effort in this regard came late this summer.

Tina Hayes Ballew '78, office coordinator, received the call from a couple in California. The husband, a firefighter, had found a Furman ring, Class of 1942, while snorkeling in the Yosemite River.

Because of the initials inside the ring, tracking down the owner was not a problem. The callers were concerned, however, because five years had elapsed since they found the ring and they were afraid that the owner, who likely would be in his or her 80s, might have died in the interim.

But we learned that Chaplain Jonathan C. Brown, Jr., was not only still alive, he lived in Greenville! He was so excited when we called to tell him we had his ring that he could barely wait until the next day, when I was able to take it to him.

I walked into the Brighton Gardens retirement community and was met by a spry 86-year-old who had enjoyed a long and distinguished career as a Navy chaplain and Baptist minister. He took the ring and proudly put it on his finger.

He believes he lost it sometime around 1960, when he was stationed in San Diego with the Navy. He used to take groups of sailors to places of interest in California and remembers one such trip to Yosemite.

I also learned that his two sons, Jonathan Brown III '68 and Mike Brown '71, are Furman graduates, and that his grandson, Jonathan M. Brown '03, is



MELANIE ARMSTRONG

working this year in the Furman athletic department.

The Furman ring is a tangible object that represents something intangible — one's Furman experience. When Chaplain Brown was a student, getting a ring was a special event.

More recently, the tradition of purchasing class rings has declined at institutions throughout the country. Coinciding with this decline has been an increase in the number of ring styles available. Schools that kept one style did not lose their ring tradition, but Furman joined the diversity trend and for the past several decades has offered dozens of choices.

The Alumni Office and the Furman bookstore are now working with a committee of alumni, students and staff to help restore Furman's ring tradition. We have reduced the number of options in ring designs to three each for men and women, which we believe will help make the decision to purchase a ring an easy one.

As the university continues to grow in national prominence, a Furman ring should be a source of pride and a recognizable symbol that represents what binds us all together — the shared experience of an outstanding education.

— Tom Triplitt '76

Director, Alumni Association

*Above, three generations of a proud Furman family: Jonathan Brown, Jr. '42, Mike Brown '71 and Jonathan Brown '03.*

## ALUMNI ACTIVITIES

### Planning in works for Homecoming 2006

Classes ending in a 1 or 6 will be celebrating a reunion at Homecoming 2006, October 20-22.

If you are interested in volunteering to help with your reunion or would like more information, please contact Melanie Krone Armstrong '94 by e-mailing [melanie.armstrong@furman.edu](mailto:melanie.armstrong@furman.edu) or calling 1-800-PURPLE3. We hope to see you next year!

### Furman Singers tour plans

The Furman Singers have once again scheduled a regional tour at the end of winter term.

The tour will begin February 24 at Seneca (S.C.) Baptist Church and end March 1 at Providence Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C. In between the Singers will perform at churches in Augusta, Ga., and in the South Carolina cities of North Augusta, Orangeburg, Pawleys Island and Mount Pleasant.

Alumni in those areas should be on the lookout for more information as tour time approaches.

### Furman legacies going strong

Furman is proud that many of its current students are legacies — in other words, they have parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings who graduated from the university.

The Alumni Association began the school year by hosting a reception for freshman legacies at the Cherrydale Alumni House. More than 50 people attended, some recognizing each other from their own days at Furman. Legacies also gathered for a lunch during Family Weekend. This tradition will continue through graduation when legacies and their families attend a graduation luncheon.

If you or a member of your family currently has a legacy at Furman and would like information about these events, please e-mail [tina.ballew@furman.edu](mailto:tina.ballew@furman.edu) or contact the Alumni Association at 1-800-PURPLE3.

### Paladin tailgating fun continues

Furman Clubs gathered throughout the Southeast this fall to cheer for the Paladins.

The season began with a tailgate before the Furman-Jacksonville State game September 1 in Jacksonville, Ala. Furman fans donned their purple and enjoyed barbecue. The same night, Greenville and Spartanburg area alumni gathered at local restaurants to enjoy TV viewing parties of the game.

October was a busy month for the Charleston (S.C.) Club, as it hosted a Lowcountry Boil for alumni and, in addition, a tailgate party before the Furman-Citadel game October 15. The Coastal Empire Club, which includes Hilton Head Island, Savannah and Statesboro, Ga., and vicinity, hosted a gathering before the Furman-Georgia Southern game November 5, and the Chattanooga Club did the same before the Paladins took on Tennessee-Chattanooga in the regular-season finale November 19.