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Lucky 13

Jim Stewart '76
Furman University

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LUCKY 13

JENNY LAMBERT LATEST FURMAN STUDENT TO RECEIVE TRUMAN AWARD

There's a maturity about Jenny Lambert that comes through even in casual conversation.

Not that she's stone-cold serious all the time — on the contrary, she smiles often and laughs easily. But after talking with her for just a few minutes, you notice how this young woman makes eye contact, listens carefully to everything you say, pauses thoughtfully, then responds in a clear, calm, articulate manner.

Sounds like she'd make a good attorney or college professor. Or a politician — even if she does seem to be honest and straightforward.

Lambert is, in fact, considering all of these options. But first, she has her senior year at Furman to complete. And whatever post-Furman track she chooses, it will be made smoother by the \$30,000 scholarship she earned this spring when she was named a Truman Scholar, becoming the 13th Furman student in the last 20 years to receive the honor.

The Truman award provides \$3,000 toward the senior undergraduate year and \$27,000 for the first two or three years of graduate school to students who plan careers in public service. Seventy-nine students nationwide were chosen by the Truman Scholarship Foundation from 598 nominees.

For Lambert, her already strong interest in public service was stoked in the summer of 1999, when she worked in San Francisco as an intern for Equal Rights Advocates, an agency that serves as a legal advocate for women, especially the disadvantaged. Her research on welfare reform in a social problems class at Furman, combined with her volunteer efforts with the underprivileged and in a women's health clinic, made her a natural for the position.

And it didn't hurt that, because she was a Francis M. Hipp intern, Furman could fully fund her internship. "Usually Equal Rights Advocates hires interns for only 20 hours a week," she says. "But because of the Hipp internship, they could have a full-time intern and not have to

worry about paying me. So it was a pretty easy sell."

Lambert describes her 10 weeks in San Francisco as "fantastic." She saw firsthand how advocacy groups work. She wrote letters, worked on Web pages, conducted focus group interviews, attended conferences and did research on such issues as sexual harassment. "I was really able to use my critical thinking skills, and they would ask my advice about different issues," she says. "They listened to me and treated me as a colleague."

Lambert, a double major in political science and history, is definitely open to new and different experiences. Aside from her summer in San Francisco, she traveled to South Africa last winter with Furman's study abroad program. She has also been active with the Organization of African Unity, the Mock Trial team, the Pre-Law Society and College Democrats. This summer, she attended the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles through a program sponsored by the Washington Center for Internship and Academic Seminars. And she conducted research on religion and politics in South Carolina with political science professor Jim Guth.

Indeed, she considers her home state a fascinating, if flawed, place. When she attended the Truman Foundation's Leadership Week in late May, she discovered that many of her fellow "scholars" had a negative impression of the Palmetto State. They questioned how long it would be before she left the conservative confines of South Carolina for an area more in line with her political leanings.

Her response? "I'm really interested in state politics, and I've always wanted to work within the system to try to change things and bring the state more toward the center of the political spectrum," she says. "We still haven't answered the race question, and things could be better in terms of religious animosity, public



Although she has lived in South Carolina her entire life, Jenny Lambert has done her share of traveling, including to Africa with a Furman study abroad program and to Germany as an exchange student the summer before her freshman year.

education and health care. But I still think this is a worthwhile place."

She's considering such top graduate schools as Yale, Virginia or Georgetown. Once she finishes, though, expect her to return to her native state, where she'll be prepared to serve as an advocate for those who need a voice — or simply a helping hand.

— Jim Stewart