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# Rinker Challenge proves major success

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## \$1.3 million gift to benefit future educators

Waco F. Childers, Jr. '47 and his wife, Elaine Duffy Childers '45, have made a gift to Furman designed not only to provide support for the university's future, but also to ensure that future generations of Furman students will be prepared to help educate children who need help the most.

The Greenville couple has established a \$1.3 million charitable annuity trust that eventually will fund the Waco F. Childers, Jr., and Elaine Duffy Childers Special Education Scholarship Fund. The scholarship will be awarded to full-time Furman students who demonstrate a desire to teach special needs children, such as those with learning disabilities or who suffer from physical, emotional or mental infirmities.

Nelly Hecker, chair of Furman's education department, says the gift "will make it possible for deserving students to complete our program." She adds, "The leadership and support for education from people like Waco and Elaine Childers present a model of commitment that we hope our students will remember and will want to emulate in the future."

Waco was for many years president and Elaine vice president of Waco F. Childers, Inc., a real estate company in Greenville. Their son, Waco F. Childers III '65, now runs the company.

FOREVER



# FURMAN

*A Comprehensive Campaign*

## Concentric Circles spark support, involvement

"Concentric Circles" is the concept that Furman volunteers use to describe the way they involve themselves and others in the life of the university.

The concept works this way: one constituent group undertakes an initiative — such as making a financial commitment to the university — and then encourages others to do the same, until the circles broaden to include all who participate, at whatever level they can.

Of late, Furman has been heartened by a surge in gifts of all sizes, especially from young, first-time alumni donors. They are leading the way in percentage of gift participation this year, the fourth year in a row in which the Alumni Association has a goal of 50 percent alumni participation in giving to the university. Few institutions of higher learning in the country have reached that figure, especially on such a consistent basis.

Why is participation, at every level of giving, so important? The number of alumni donors provides an indication of the measure of alumni satisfaction with the education they received and with the course their alma mater is pursuing. Foundations and grants agencies often look at these figures when determining which programs and institutions to support, and a strong alumni participation rate can give a school an advantage when funding decisions are made.

The national media also tend to take note of a school's percentage of alumni giving. For example, Furman, which is traditionally mentioned in most lists of top national liberal arts colleges, was included in a March 30 article

in the *Wall Street Journal* on "hot colleges." Some of the credit goes to first-time donors.

This year 23 constituent groups — Concentric Circles — within the Furman family have already attained 100 percent participation in giving. These groups range from the board of trustees to the library faculty, from the university's housing staff to the National Development Council. In addition, Furman's teaching faculty and administrative staff have broken all-time records in financial support, demonstrating that their care and concern for the university goes far beyond their valuable gifts of time and talent.

As this academic year draws to a close, Furman is proud that more and greater circles of alumni and friends are embracing the university's mission and helping to provide the finest teaching and learning experience for today's students.

— Don Lineback

*Vice President for Development*

### Whither the Campaign?

The recent surge of campaign gifts is expected to bring the total raised to \$175 million as Furman begins the celebration of its 175th anniversary this fall. Yet a number of projects and endowments remain to be completed, including the library expansion. The summer issue of *Furman* magazine will include information on where the campaign goes from this point.

## Rinker Challenge proves major success

Last October Leighan Rinker, vice chair of the board of trustees, and her husband, David, issued a challenge to all alumni. The challenge was simple: for all alumni who made a gift to the university, the Rinkers would respond with a gift of \$100 for the expansion and renovation of the library, up to \$625,000.

Alumni responded enthusiastically, and their high level of support made the Rinker Challenge an unqualified success. The fund drive raised the full \$625,000 toward the library project.

However, in keeping with the spirit of the Rinker Challenge, which was also designed to encourage alumni participation, we are continuing our efforts to reach 50 percent participation by June 30, the end of Furman's fiscal year.

If you have yet to make your gift to the Furman Fund, it is not too late! Simply send your donation to the Furman Fund, 3300 Poinsett Highway, Greenville, S.C. 29613, or call 1-800-787-7534. You can even make your gift on-line by going to the Furman Web site ([www.furman.edu](http://www.furman.edu)) and clicking on "Giving to Furman."

No matter the method you choose, your support will be greatly appreciated and will help make the Rinker Challenge a truly memorable effort.

— Phil Howard

*Director, Furman Fund*