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## Furman and the ties that bind

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## FURMAN AND THE TIES THAT BIND

**WHEN I ATTENDED** a funeral of an alumnus in March, I was once again reminded of what a special place Furman is.

John Vernon Platt '60 died March 17. He was a Baptist minister whose last church was Spring Valley Baptist in Columbia, S.C. (Full obituary, page 38.)

I met him in May 2010 when he returned to campus for Commencement, where he joined a number of his classmates in celebrating the 50th anniversary of their graduation. He had just lost his wife to cancer and was struggling with his grief, but he delivered a beautiful invocation at the dinner before his class led the Class of 2010 into the graduation ceremony.

John loved Furman, and he made that clear to all who knew him. His Furman connections were mentioned many times during the funeral service. The pastor even wore a purple tie in honor of John's devotion to alma mater.

For me, though, the most touching part of the service was hearing the stories about the men from the houses at 4 and 6 Nona Street, near the downtown Furman campus. I don't think the street even exists anymore, but the friendships and memories remain.

For more than 50 years, the residents of those two houses have gotten together at least once annually to share stories about their lives and to reminisce about their college days. Some of their tales are evidently the stuff of legends. And the gatherings were usually organized by John Platt.

Those men and their families have remained close because of their Furman bonds. Many of them have children who attended Furman as well — like John, the father of Todd '89 and Bryan '91



I'm sure that many schools have groups of friends who stay close through the years. But Furman seems to have more than most — which just goes to show that there's something about our time at Furman that creates great stories and great friendships, like those of the men from Nona Street

**WELCOME KATE!:** Kate Hofler '09 has joined the constituent relations staff as Web communications coordinator. She previously worked as communications director for Greenville Forward, a local nonprofit whose goal is to enhance the city's quality of life by developing and promoting a strong vision for growth and development in the years ahead.

Kate graduated from Furman with a double major in English and political science. She was a member of Tri Delta and Senior Order, was Panhellenic president, and served as the student editor of the university's internal news site.

The Web communications coordinator is a new position for our department and will help us strengthen our digital communication program. As we learn and grow with this new venture, we want your thoughts. Please share any ideas you may have by e-mailing [kate.hofler@furman.edu](mailto:kate.hofler@furman.edu).

With Kate at the helm, we look forward to connecting with you in creative new ways.

**FAMILY WEEKEND:** This year the constituent relations staff is deeply involved in planning Family Weekend. The 2012 program is scheduled September 28–30, with Western Carolina University as the opponent on football Saturday. Judy Wilson and Patty White are taking the lead as we make arrangements for one of the major weekends of fall semester.

Information will be forthcoming this summer. For all Furman news regarding parent/family needs, visit <http://alumni.furman.edu> and click the Parents link.

**HOMECOMING 2012:** It's never too early to begin planning for Homecoming. Homecoming 2012 will be the weekend of October 19–21, with Southern Conference arch-rival Georgia Southern coming to town for the football game.

Classes ending in 2 and 7 will have reunions, and the Class of 1962 will be celebrating its 50th in grand style. We will also once again hold the "5th Quarter" event (for alumni who have graduated in the last 10 years) immediately after the game.

We always try to make each Homecoming more exciting than the last, so please plan to attend and see what we have in store this year. Information should be coming your way by mid-summer.

**I'VE GOTTA WEAR SHADES:** I recently had the pleasure of working with the Furman Admission Office when it hosted events for accepted students and for major scholarship candidates. I was amazed at the caliber of students — and parents — who are interested in Furman. Were we ever this smart and poised?

Applications increased by more than 20 percent this year, surpassing 6,000 for the first time and easily establishing a school record. If the potential students I met are any indication, Furman's future is quite bright indeed.

— TOM TRIPLITT

*The author, a 1976 graduate, is executive director of constituent relations and alumni programs.*