

# FURMAN UNIVERSITY

## *Introduction and History*

Furman University is an independent, coeducational, liberal arts college located on a 750-acre suburban campus on the outskirts of Greenville, South Carolina. Founded by South Carolina Baptists in 1826, the university is an old institution; yet its facilities are modern, all the buildings on the present campus having been constructed since the late 1950s. Most of Furman's 2,500 undergraduates are from the South Atlantic region, but more than 40 states and 20 foreign countries are represented in the student population. Working with the Furman students are a faculty and staff whose primary concern is to enhance student learning. Over 90 percent of the faculty hold doctoral degrees in their academic disciplines.

### *History*

Furman University is named for Richard Furman (1755-1825), a prominent pastor in Charleston, South Carolina, who was president of the nation's first Baptist Convention and a leader in Baptist higher education.

The university traces its roots to two academies established in the early nineteenth century: the Greenville Female Academy, a part of the Greenville Academy, was chartered in 1820; the Furman Academy and Theological Institution for men was founded in 1826 by the South Carolina Baptist Convention in Edgefield, South Carolina.

During its early decades, the Furman Academy moved first to Stateburg, then to Winnsboro, South Carolina. In 1850 the school was chartered as the Furman University and moved to Greenville. Eight years later its theological department became the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, which eventually moved to Louisville, Kentucky. Between 1920 and 1932 the university included a law school, but for most of its history Furman has been a liberal arts college. In 1854 the Greenville Baptist Female College opened on the campus of the Greenville Academy. It was governed by Furman's board of trustees until 1908, when it acquired its own board. In 1916 it became the Greenville Woman's College.

Furman was accredited in 1924 by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and that same year the university became a beneficiary of the Duke Endowment established by James Buchanan Duke. In 1933 Furman and the Greenville Woman's College were coordinated under a single president and board.

Furman broke ground for a new campus seven miles north of Greenville in 1953, and five years later held its first classes on the present site. Furman received a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in 1973. In 1992 formal ties with the South Carolina Baptist Convention ended, and the college became independent. Today Furman ranks among the leading liberal arts colleges in the nation.