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## THE RECRUITS

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*Furman alumni Mark Clary '91, Jay Hatten '01, Dave Ellison '72, Steve Grant '80, and Don Clardy '91*

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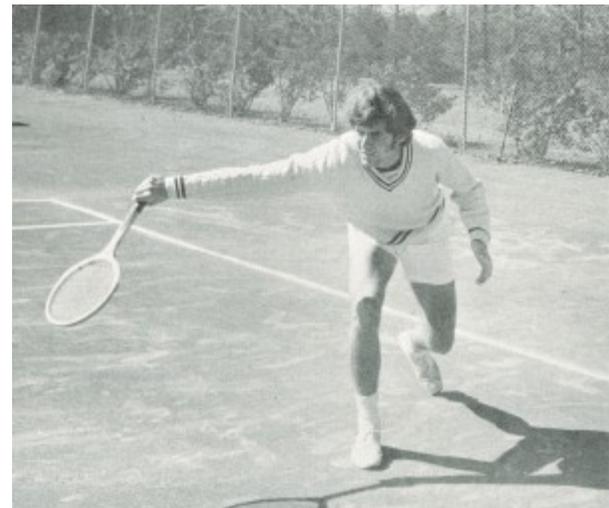
*by Ron Wagner '93, Senior Contributing Writer*

When Dave Ellison '72 and Steve Grant '80 began building a Northwestern Mutual office nearly four decades ago in Greenville, the first and most important task was finding employees with the drive and confidence to start from the ground up. Luckily, they knew just where to look—right up the road at their alma mater.

“I’ve always felt that college athletes were good prospects for this because they’ve needed to have coaching,” Ellison said. “If they got to become an NCAA athlete, they were achievers. They’ve had to work hard at something, and this business requires hard work.”

Ellison and Grant would know. A standout tennis player under legendary coach Paul Scarpa, Ellison was elected to the Furman Athletic Hall of Fame in 1992, while Grant was a two-time baseball team captain playing for Tom Wall. Over the years, Ellison’s recruiting efforts have produced a steady supply of Paladins at what now ranks as the fifth-largest Northwestern Mutual branch in the country.

Dave Ellison '72



“I was volunteering at Furman and knew the coaches and was very proactive in trying to recruit Furman athletes to come into this office,” he said.

They have helped the company grow from a small life-insurance business into a full-service financial services operation, and as recently as a few months ago there were eight Furman graduates roaming the Northwestern halls. But what Ellison is most proud of, as he eases back on handling the day-to-day operation, is not the money made, but of the lives changed by fellow alums who have become significant contributors to the Greenville philanthropic community.

“What I encourage the young people to do is to get engaged in the community, but don’t do it to be prospecting for your business,” Ellison said. “Do it because it’s something that you’re interested in.”

Practicing what he preaches, Ellison has been on the American Heart Association’s Upstate Heart Ball Committee for the past two years in honor of his father, who died of a heart attack. Also a member of the Furman Board of Trustees, Ellison is a past trustee of the United Way of Greenville County, board member and chair of the United Way Palmetto Society, and commissioner of the Greenville Housing Authority—among many other things.



Don Clardy '91

Don Clardy '91, Mark Clary '94, and Jay Hatten '01 also carry the Furman banner at Northwestern, and all invest a great deal of time into activities nearer their hearts than their bank accounts. Clary is a past board member of the United Way of Greenville County, the Community Foundation of Greenville, and the South Carolina State Museum Foundation, as well as a current board member of Presbyterian Retirement Communities of South Carolina. Hatten, like Ellison and Clary was once a member of the Furman tennis team, volunteers at Miracle Hill Ministries and Mitchell Road Orphan Care Ministry and is a deacon at Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church—when he’s not busy raising his six children with Betsy (Wilburn) Hatten '01.

Clardy, who was a wide receiver on Furman’s 1988 national championship football team and still holds the school record for single-game punt return yardage, was an attorney before coming to Northwestern, and he specializes in estate planning. He also has a special-needs child, and the experience compelled him to become involved in organizations that helped his own family.

Clardy is a board member for the Advanced Institute for Development and Learning and a member of the GHS Children’s Hospital Development Council, as well as a past endowment committee member for the Meyer Center for Children with Special Needs. But Clardy’s biggest passion is offering his considerable expertise pro bono.

“Often when someone has a child with special needs, they’re on government benefits. So there are asset and income limitations, and it becomes very relevant once the children reach the age of 18,” he said. “It purely is done out of giving back and helping people. Now

I certainly do get some good clients out of it also, but I do a lot of work for no money as well.”

Steve Grant '80



As does Grant, whose list of volunteer activities is far too long to highlight here. Tragically, much of the impetus came from the deaths of both of his sons to drug overdoses as young men, which fueled Grant to create Chris and Kelly's HOPE Foundation dedicated to financially assisting organizations and programs whose purpose is to help adolescents and young adults who are struggling with substance abuse, addiction, and depression.

“We've done a great job raising money, almost without asking for it. It sort of just comes, and it always seems to come at the right time and for the right group,” Grant said. “Everyone in the office is very supportive about what I'm doing, and I know everyone in the office has their own special place. New people come to me all the time and say, ‘Steve, I want to be involved in the community. Where should I go? What should I do?’

And I always say, ‘what's your passion?’”

Kelley Stovall has taken over the reins as Northwestern's chief recruitment officer, and though she is a College of Charleston graduate she's used to being surrounded by purple. Stovall's two sisters went to Furman, and her father, Pat McKinney, served on the university's board of trustees.

But Stovall says Furman graduates would be a top target with or without family ties.

“(Furman grads) have had some pretty successful careers,” she said. “I'm responsible for sourcing and selecting candidates, and I'm definitely looking for polish. Typically our clients are the middle to upper class, so being able to speak with them with professionalism is really important. Any time I step on Furman's campus I feel that.”

John Barker, Furman's director of career services for 17 years, says that, after years of students bolting Greenville upon graduation, the city has become the top choice for alumni to settle down. Northwestern was ahead of the curve, with Ellison making himself an annual fixture at university career fairs and networking receptions years ago when downtown was little more than boarded windows.

“People like Dave Ellison have created an atmosphere and an environment here in Greenville (for Furman graduates),” he said. “We've been fortunate to have those types of individuals in the corporate world who will come back and say ‘this is something important; Furman grads tend to be some of the better individuals that we recruit.’ It makes selling Furman to these organizations easier because they know the caliber of candidates.”

Learn more about Furman's [Malone Career Center](#), or for more information about the client services that [Northwestern Mutual](#) provides, contact Stovall at [kelly.m.stovall@nm.com](mailto:kelly.m.stovall@nm.com). Last updated October 5, 2016.