

Wachovia invests in diversity program at Furman

Bank gives \$500,000 to leadership academy at Riley Institute

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Wachovia Bank announced Thursday it was donating \$500,000 to Furman University's Diversity Leadership Academy, a gift expected to have an impact far beyond the 150 leaders it will help train by 2011.

David Shi, Furman's president, said Wachovia is setting a watermark for investment in diversity leadership in the state.

"It's a gift that will have reverberations across the years," he said.

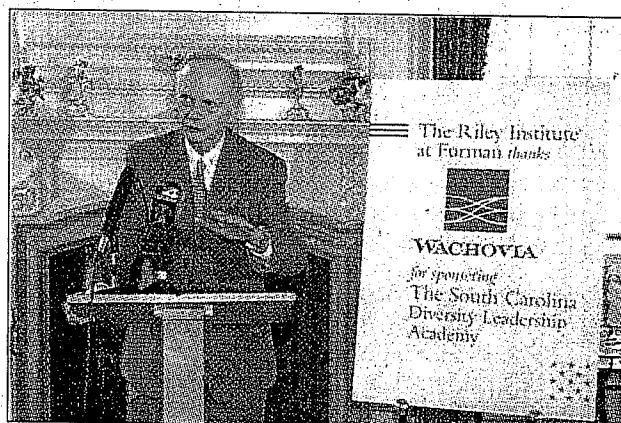
Shi said more than 170 CEOs, vice presidents, rab-

bis and pastors, as well as civic, business and nonprofit executives, have undergone the leadership training. "We'll be able to expand and extend the leadership academy."

The Diversity Leadership Academy is an arm of the Richard W. Riley Institute of Politics, Government and Public Leadership at Furman.

The institute is named after Richard W. Riley, the former governor and U.S. secretary of education for eight years for President Bill Clinton. Riley now is on Furman's board of directors.

Wachovia has made a siz-



PATRICK COLLARD / Staff

Welcome gift: Dick Riley, former education secretary, thanks Wachovia for its \$500,000 donation to the Riley Institute for its Diversity Leadership Academy at Furman.

able down payment to helping diversity, Riley said. "It's the most significant thing that's happened in engaged learning," Riley said.

Kendall K. Alley, a re-

gional vice president for Wachovia, said the bank has been investing in diversity training for 15 years or more. Some bank employees have trained off site;

some via computer. He said with countries such as China, Africa, India and South America now developing, the bank needs to look as far into the future as it can.

Chris Riley, a Wachovia bank executive, said the bank tries to hire personnel at the same level of diversity as the community which a bank branch serves.

The practice helps bank branches relate better to customers, he said.

Alley said every bank manager and supervisor undergoes diversity training. People of different backgrounds, cultures, races and religion who are in the workplace need to not only get along, but to maximize what they are doing, he said.

"What we're trying to do is make a gift that will have impact," he said after presenting the \$500,000. "This is an opportunity to bring different voices in the room."

Bob Morris, of the Community Foundation of Greenville, a nonprofit, said he was in the first class in 2003. "You can't tell what somebody thinks by looking at them," Morris said.

He and Greenville developer Bob Hughes, another attendee, said class members opened their eyes to issues that they never thought they would ever fathom.

Rick Harris, a vice president at Michelin, put it another way. "You can't help anybody if you're not sitting at the table," he said.