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Facebook Friends Speak: How College Teachers Made an Impact on Their Lives

John Bird

Winthrop University, birdj@winthrop.edu

Teaching and Learning Center

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Dr. John Bird
Professor,
Department of
English
Bancroft Hall 260
(803) 323-3679

Director, Teaching &
Learning Center
Dinkins Hall 233
(803) 323-2447

EMAIL:
birdj@winthrop.edu

Winthrop University

Facebook Friends Speak: How College Teachers Made an Impact on Their Lives

Last week, Frank Pullano dropped by the TLC office and asked me what I was up to that day. "Writing *The Weekly Reader*," I said. Frank asked, "How do you think up what you want to write? Do you always have a plan?" The answer to the last question is "sometimes." And the answer to the first question is "sometimes I can't."

After five years of *The Weekly Reader*, an average of 25 issues per year, ideas sometimes take longer. My idea this week is to let other people write the column.

Yesterday I posed this question to my Facebook friends: "What is something a college teacher (or college staff member) did or said that had a big effect on you?" I promised to keep identities vague, unless the person said it was okay to mention his or her name. The responses started rolling in soon after I asked.

One of my cousins, who is now a staff member at

another area college: "My math professor, Arthur Charlesworth, had a profound effect on me. His love of teaching really showed in the way he taught. He was so excited about the subject, he got me interested in it. I will forever be grateful to him for my love of math." A former student of mine, 30 years ago, when I taught 7th grade for a year while working on my PhD: "The professors who had the most profound effects on me (and others) were those who simply took the time to talk, outside of the classroom, so that we weren't merely faces in the crowd (nor petals on a wet, black bough), but individuals. My favorite prof (now, sadly, deceased) and I would meet for coffee once a week to talk about Shakespeare, Tennyson, the *Golden Bough*, his marriage, and my boyfriends. We later met up in London when I studied there (and he was enjoying his residence abroad) for lunch. Beautiful man. Great sense of humor, patience,

and--importantly--no grand ego."

Another former student, from 35 years ago when I taught high school for two years: "Dr. George Melton, Professor, always said, 'To get what you want, you have to pay your dues'. So true...nothing comes without hard work and determination!" A fellow mandolin player, the person who showed me how to play Bill Monroe's "Rawhide": "Studying and learning about your chosen profession for two hours a week after graduation. 'Keep it up for life,' he said." One of my favorite professors of all time, from my undergraduate days, 40 years ago: "After I failed my MA orals at the University of Virginia, faculty member Bill Elwood showed up at my attic apartment with a six pack and asked me, 'Why do you think Nixon keeps running for office?'"

A friend from college, David Hedrick, a gifted singer/songwriter: "Dr. H. Lawrence Bond of ASU's

“A professor told me, ‘You won’t remember the lectures, the tests, or the papers you wrote, you will remember the experiences you have, as they will have the biggest effects of your young adult life and ultimately prepare you for having an independent future.’”



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History Dept. encouraged and supported me throughout my years at Appalachian. He was a wonderful mentor. With Dr. Bond's help, I earned my BA in Philosophy/Religion and then my MA in History. I owe much of my success in life to him. John, Dr. Bond passed away a few years ago. If you would like to use my name, and give him the credit he deserves, please do.” A mandolin friend who lives in Michigan: “One thing I remember that has always stayed with me is, at the party the seniors had to celebrate our graduation, Dr. Culpepper, said, as he took a sip of his first beer: ‘The first one doesn’t taste so good, but after a few, it doesn’t matter!’ I will always remember that advice!”

A junior high school friend and fellow clarinetist in Mr. Neel’s band [I have written about Mr. Neel before, one of my greatest teachers]: “I liked Ray Neel's style of teaching in band: fun, uplifting, and encouraging! That is a good style for life and living that is not just for the classroom only.” Someone who went to college the same time I did and knows a million people I know, but we seem never have met until Facebook: “I’m blanking on ‘memorable’

professors, but my favorite classes were in Men’s Glee Club with Dr. Phillip Paul, who was one of the finest men I’ve met in my life time.”

A Winthrop colleague who has served our students for many years: “I have never forgotten the lesson taught on compassion and caring by Angie, a food server at my undergraduate college. I was in very critical condition in a hospital ICU because a drunk driver hit me as I was ending my freshman year just before finals. My parents were out of the country and I was forbidden all visitors. Angie gained access to the ICU (her daughter was a nurse), and there she was suddenly by my bedside and said, ‘I knew you were alone and I thought you would like someone to just hold your hand.’ Conversely, when I was able to return to classes three months later and limped into the Registrar’s office to begin working on resolving my five incompletes, her comment was, ‘Where the hell have you been?’ She also revoked my academic scholarship.” A colleague in the English Department: “Dr. Brightman told me, ‘You have what it takes.’” A former CRTW student, who now teaches at an area high school: “Your

engaging teaching style inspired me to have my own. Dr. Dave Pretty’s passion for his topic, Dr. Silverman’s ability to make me feel so important to him, Dr. Rebecca Evers designed her curriculum to be so applicable and useful... I could go on! My professors at Winthrop were remarkable.

A hard-working and dedicated staff member at Winthrop: “A teacher (that I liked) told me he was sure I would be bored in someone’s class because ‘I slept in his class’.....ah, the guilt! Didn’t do that anymore.” A former Winthrop English grad student: “Once had a professor offer to delivery my baby with the help of his shoestring. That kind of caring sticks with a student.” A young guy from Philadelphia I met on a tour of Costa Rica: “A professor told me, ‘You won’t remember the lectures, the tests, or the papers you wrote, you will remember the experiences you have, as they will have the biggest effects of your young adult life and ultimately prepare you for having an independent future.’”

I have more! But I must stop, for now. When you teach, you never know when you will change a person’s life with something you say or do.

Thanks For Helping Make the Teaching and Learning Center Work!

Winthrop's Teaching and Learning Center offers a wide variety of sessions each year for faculty and staff, on teaching, technology, professional development, and personal development. From leading class discussion to mastering the Smart podium to tenure and promotion to cooking soufflés, the TLC tries to make sure that all faculty and staff receive

the kinds of professional and personal development that will make them better teachers, administrators, and employees.

To offer this programming, the TLC depends on the talent, expertise, and generosity of our faculty and staff. We do not have a big budget to bring in outside speakers and experts. Even so, we are able to offer engaging,

timely, and valuable sessions every year on a variety of topics. We thank those who have offered their time and talent in past years.

We also thank those of you who have attended TLC sessions. Your time is valuable, and we appreciate you taking some of it to enrich yourself through professional and personal development.

A Service From the TLC: Teaching Consultation

The TLC for several years has been offering a service: teaching consultation. At the instructor's request, I (or another agreed-upon person) will visit your class to observe and consult with you afterwards about your successes and challenges. This consultation has nothing to do with the tenure and

promotion process, and no reports will be made to department chairs or deans (unless you so request). The invitation to the consultant can only come from the instructor, not from a dean or chair or any other person. All conversations will be private and confidential. If you don't want me to visit your class and observe your teaching, we could

just meet and talk about your teaching. If I am not available to visit your class because of my schedule, I will find a qualified person to do the consulting. So please let me know if you would like to invite me into your class or for a consultation. Call or email me (803) 323-3679 or birdj@winthrop.edu.

Go2Knowledge—Learning On Demand!

Go2Knowledge is a website that offers a variety of video presentations on faculty and staff professional development. You will find presentations by nationally-known experts in seven categories: At-Risk Populations, Campus Safety, Organizational Development, Student Success, Teaching and Learning, Technology,

and Open Educational Resources. Within each category, you will find a number of excellent and informative videos. The Office of Academic Affairs has provided us a one-year subscription to this service.

People often tell the TLC that they would like to go to sessions, but they don't have the time or they can't

at the times sessions are offered. With Go2Knowledge, you can attend sessions on demand, anywhere, 24/7. The TLC will also have frequent Go2Knowledge Groups, where we meet to discuss a presentation. Log in here: <http://www.go2knowledge.org/winthrop> See you there!

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Thought For the Week

"To be good is noble, but to teach others how to be good is nobler--and less trouble."
--Mark Twain