

WINDOW on WESTERN

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For the LOVE of TEACHING

Who was your favorite professor at Western?

We asked WWU graduates to tell us about the outstanding teachers and mentors they encountered during their Western experience.

What we received was an outpouring of affection, pride, awe, appreciation, gratitude and respect for faculty members who transformed the lives of their students in wonderful ways.

On the pages here and inside, and on the Alumni Association Web site, you can read about several generations of caring, dedicated faculty members who launched careers; coached athletes and struggling artists; inspired legions of teachers, musicians and scientists; and offered jobs, humor, energy and even a snack in the refrigerator.

Most of all, you told us how caring Western's teachers are.

If you would like to contribute your comments about an inspiring WWU faculty member, please write to alumni@wwu.edu.

The full text of these comments and more can be found at <http://www.wwu.edu/~alumni>.



Nancy J. Johnson

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My favorite PROFESSOR

Bob Keller, professor emeritus, Fairhaven College

Having officially retired from teaching in 1994, you could say that Bob Keller was a great teacher. With Bob Keller though, you have to ask if it is possible to retire from what you really are.

I first encountered Bob Keller when he co-taught a class at Fairhaven College, "Forests of the Pacific Northwest." That class turned out to be one of the most profound learning experiences of my college career.

By taking a complex and controversial topic, throwing in rigorous readings, difficult questions and stimulating discussions, adding 70 professionals representing a breadth of knowledge and opinion and logging 2,500 miles worth of field trips, Bob Keller helped shape the path to critical thinking and respectful learning. That was 1999, five years after his supposed retirement.



Bob Keller

To this day, Bob continues to be a teacher and mentor. He asks tough questions that get me thinking about my assumptions. He encourages me to write, write, write and he is always assigning reading. He has a genuine interest in people learning from multiple sources including each other. And he fosters that learning by respecting all who have something to teach, something to say.

Bob Keller never really retired from teaching. He simply is a teacher and a great one at that.

— Bob Langan ('00)
Bellingham

Charles Lappenbusch, coach, administrator and professor emeritus of physical education

More humorous than any comedian on TV.

— William (Mike) Clarke ('50)

Nancy J. Johnson, professor of English education

Rosemary Scott-Vohs, communication department and Woodring instructor

These women each took me under their wing to be my mentor. Both loved literature and had a unique twist on bringing it to people in a fresh way: Nancy through literature circles, and Rosemary through storytelling.

Being in their classes awakened my heart to the artistic use of words, but most of all, in their classes I felt cared about. Somehow, amidst hundreds of students, they managed to create warm spaces in which words, and hearts, mattered.

— Kristi Lentz ('00)



Rosemary Vohs

Nancy Johnson photo by Kelly Heese
Bob Keller photo by Bob Langan