



Dr. Bob R. Derryberry

July 19, 1937 - April 13, 2010

Dr. Bob R. Derryberry's life was a celebration of words. While his life ended on April 13, 2010 at the age of 72, the celebration continues in the lives of his family, his friends and colleagues, and his many students, past and present. Bob invested in words—and words endure. Bob was born on July 19, 1937, in Wardville, Oklahoma, to parents Bryon and Trudie (Elmore) Derryberry. His love of words led him to graduate school studies, and he earned an MA from the University of Arkansas and later, a PhD from the University of Missouri. This advanced study of speech communication honed his thinking, writing, and speaking, and he delighted in opportunities to study with professors such as Loren Reid. Bob Derryberry married Joyce Nettles on December 24, 1958. They had a fifty-one year marriage filled with words spoken in and with love. Professor Derryberry inspired others to use words well during his forty-six year career at Southwest Baptist University. As Director of Forensics, Bob "Dr. D." Derryberry led speech and debate teams to more than twenty state championships in Missouri and more than fifteen superior team ratings at national Pi Kappa Delta tournaments. As a speech professor, he devoted countless hours to hundreds of students at all levels of experience and confidence, guiding students toward better speaking, better thinking, and better listening. From his academic study of words to his lively interpersonal dialogues with colleagues and students, Bob Derryberry's life was a celebration of words. But perhaps the most important words to Bob were those spoken in kindness—his standard for speech at its best. Bob is survived

by his wife, Joyce, of the home; his daughter and son-in-law, Marian Derryberry and Adam Ackerman, grandson Miles Derryberry Ackerman of West Newton, MA; daughter and son-in-law, Elisa and Jim Fish and granddaughters Christy and Emme Fish of Morrisville, MO and Julie Reynolds of Ft Worth, TX. Bob was the last living child of Byron and Trudie Derryberry. Three brothers and four sisters preceded him in death: Buel, Byron Jr., Wallace Christopher, Janice, Betty Clarice, Jackie Williams and Inez Wilkins. Bob's extended family, friends and students will miss him greatly. In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to the Bob and Joyce Tradition of Excellence Scholarship Fund or the Bob Derryberry Endowed Chair Fund at Southwest Baptist University, 1600 University Av, Bolivar, Missouri. A celebration of Bob's life will be held Saturday morning April 17, in the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church of Bolivar, Missouri with visitation at 9:30 followed by a memorial service at 10:30. Burial will follow in Greenwood Cemetery under the direction of Murray Funeral Home.

PDF Printable Version

Tribute Wall



“ *Dr. Bob R. Derryberry*

October 05, 2023 at 05:18 AM



“ *Dr. Bob R. Derryberry*

January 26, 2023 at 04:15 PM



“ *Dr. D. taught me many things: The art of persuasion is beautiful and just; green really is my color; until you understand the opposition's point of view, you never truly understand your own; I never really earned an "A" in any of his classes - they were a gift ("I'm being kind, aren't I young man?"); words have power and most importantly, I really didn't know as much as I thought I did. He taught me to be a better student, teacher, teammate and person. Thanks for your wisdom Dr. D. Thank you Joyce and his family for sharing him with us.*

Jason Shaw - April 19, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ *Sharing a cup of coffee with our "esteemed colleague", Bob Derryberry, made any day much brighter. Missourie or Missourah? How does one pronounce Kiowa? What does retirement offer? Bob was an expert on many things, but he was always eager to learn more. We treasure our many memories of him. His "scholars" and honored colleagues will miss him greatly. Our hearts go out to his family, as well. Blessings on each of you as you grieve his passing.*

Hugh and Twila Smith - April 17, 2010 at 12:00 AM

CP

“ Dr. Derryberry inspired me to do my best. My Father, H. A. Paden, and Dr. Derryberry, shared office space at SWBC/SBU. They had many times of growth in the Lord Jesus....and life in general. A great man is now with the Lord. May our Lord sustain you, Mrs. Derryberry and your family. Proverbs 3:5-6

Charles Paden - April 17, 2010 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ Dear Joyce and family, Please accept our sincere sympathy on the passing of Dr. Derryberry. He was a great man, whom we both admired, respected and loved. We mourn the loss of a dear friend. We celebrate his wonderful life. The world is a better place because he was here. God Bless You All. Sincerely, Dr. James and La DONNA Heflin, Austin and SweetiePie Lawton, Oklahoma

Dr. James and La Donna Heflin, Austin & SweetiePie - April 16, 2010 at 12:00 AM

ML

“ I will always cherish the memories of a such an outstanding professor that had such a profound impact on my life. I truly learned from one of the best "scholars" during my years at SBU and feel deeply blessed to have been under his instruction as one of his communication students. I was deeply saddened to hear of his passing and my heart goes out to all of the family members. I will rejoice in the day when I will see him again in Heaven. We lost one of the best here on earth, but the best days are yet to come.

MariLynn Lewy - April 16, 2010 at 12:00 AM

JO

“ Thinking of you and your family during this time.

Jim, Jane & Jennifer Otradovec - April 16, 2010 at 12:00 AM

YK

“ Dr. Derryberry's instruction and the inspiration he imparted to those of us who were his students will live on in our memory. My first speech class under Dr. Derryberry was in the fall of 1965. I later had two other speech classes under him. He was a superb instructor.

Yvonne Overstreet Kerr - April 16, 2010 at 12:00 AM

JT

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with Bob's family in these days. I looked forward to just being around him. If kindness could be personified, it would be Bob. I was amazed at his natural gift of knowing just the right words and just the right number of words. His language, though, was a mere reflection of his spirit, a gift we'll never replace. Jim, Katie, Sarah, and Brittany Tarrant

Jim Tarrant - April 15, 2010 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ At times like this, it is so difficult to find the right words to convey our profound sadness. It's comforting to know that he is at peace without pain. In the quiet moments, which he cherished, I can hear his gentle voice and infectious laugh, and that helps more than I can say. I extend my condolences to Joyce and the entire Derryberry family, as well as the SBU family.

Joel Hefling - April 15, 2010 at 12:00 AM

RR

“ Our hearts are saddened by the loss of this dear friend and colleague. He enlivened the spirit of so many with his gentle touch and kind words of encouragement. We have all been blessed by being in his presence and knowing him. Thanks Bob for the wonderful memories.

R. David and Loyce Ray - April 15, 2010 at 12:00 AM

LK

“ I was saddened to hear of the death of a great man and friend, Dr. Bob Derryberry! Dr. D, thanks for sharpening words when I needed to do better, kind words to soothe a hurt spirit, and experiences together that words fail to express. You are at home with God! I await a grand reunion with you in the presence of God in the future. My thoughts and prayers are with your family and fiends and students.

Lee Kanakis - April 15, 2010 at 12:00 AM

BS

“ When we went to Nationals in 1976, we thought we were Dr. D.'s special team. Over the years, it became clear. It wasn't us. It was him! Every team was Dr. D.'s special one. He made us work that hard because he believed in us, as scholars and speakers and children of God. How I will miss him.

Betty Jean Steinshouer - April 14, 2010 at 12:00 AM

WH

“ My thoughts and prayers go out to the Derryberry family as a loved one has gone home. AS a 1994 alumni of sbu Dr. Derryberry was a good man. He was a big influence around the campus. He will be missed. I offer strength to the family. May God bless ur family and watch over u during this time.

william helsley - April 14, 2010 at 12:00 AM

TE

“ Dr. Derryberry was a prince of a man. It was an honor to learn from him and an even greater honor to call him a friend. I have fond memories of my days at SBU in LARGE part because of the way in which Dr. Derryberry touched my life. This scholar loved him and will never forget him.

Travis Edwards - April 14, 2010 at 12:00 AM

LN

“ Just a few weeks ago, I was thinking of Dr. Derryberry and tried to email him, but my email bounced back. I was a Communications major and he taught me so much. He was a gracious friend. He will be so missed.

Laurie McKinney Nicholson - April 14, 2010 at 12:00 AM

PB

“ I think that when Dr. D. appeared before the heavenly Father, instead of hearing, "Well done thou good and faithful servant," he instead heard, "Many things done well-- very well!" I will miss my friend, encourager and fellow Democrat and traditional Baptist. Paul Bass

Paul Bass - April 14, 2010 at 12:00 AM

SJ

“ The forensics community has lost one of its finest leaders. Dr. Derryberry will be missed by so many of us but his spirit will live on in all the lives he touched over the years.

Stephen Jeffcoat - April 14, 2010 at 12:00 AM

HW

“ You will be missed my friend!!

Heath Watson - April 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM

CW

“ Derryberry family, I would like to express my deepest condolences regarding the loss of Dr. Bob Derryberry. I was fortunate to have him as a professor and forensics coach. I wrote an email to him several weeks ago letting him know how much I appreciated all that he has taught me in life. You should take comfort and pride in the fact that Dr. D spent his life pouring himself into others, teaching students to be gracious and kind at all times, which he consistently displayed in his own life. I am truly sorry for your loss, but thank you for sharing him with those of us that are better people because of his impact in our lives. God bless, Clint Wooderson SBU Forensics team member '97-'01

Clint Wooderson - April 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM

TF

“ Joyce, my heart hurts for you. I loved working with Dr. Derryberry. It is appropriate that his career culminated in a department named in his honor, furnished by the students who were his legacy.

Terri Cox Fallin - April 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM

AN

“ Condolences go out to the family of Dr. Derryberry, a true forensic legend. I had the opportunity of performing for him during a final round of one of my first tournaments. Soon after, I learned about his tremendous knowledge about the activity. People like Dr. Derryberry make this world keep turning, and keep people interested in such a life-changing activity. Thoughts and prayers go out to the Derryberry family.

Anon - April 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM

MB

“ Kris and I are profoundly saddened at the news. He was a gentle and caring man and a Lion in his profession. Our sincerely condolences to his family and friends.

Michael Bartanen - April 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM

NM

“ My heart is broken with the passing of Bob today - my friend, my colleague, and my closet Episcopalian. I will miss working with him through Forensics, talking with him, and teasing him. You, his family, are all in my thoughts and prayers. He loved you so.

Nina-Jo Moore - April 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM

BM

“ I spent more of my professional years working with Bob than I worked with any other person. My life bears the marks. I am kinder and possess more than is in my nature, and it's because of him. Please read and/or contribute to the ongoing comments about Bob at www.facebook.com/sbucom.

Brett Miller - April 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM

JT

“ To Mrs. Derryberry and Family, Dr. Derryberry was a wonderful, considerate man. He taught all of us SBU kids a lot about communicating...and life. He inspired me to become a teacher. He will be missed by all of the Bearcats around the country. Thank you for sharing him with all us over the years. Sincerely, Jodi Elder

Jodi Thompson-Elder - April 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM

TH

“ i have wonderful memories of dr. derryberry teaching, encouraging all his "fine scholars" and using his warmth and humour to connect with us. he made coming to class worthwhile! a fine man who will be fondly remembered yet sadly missed.

teresa huff - April 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM

AS

“ It has been 21 years since I was in Dr. Derrberry's class, yet I think of him often and thank the Lord for his influence in my life. He was a true "Scholar and a Gentleman". Aaron Stouffer - Class of 1993

Aaron Stouffer - April 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM

SA

“ Bob Derryberry taught me what Pi Kappa Delta 'fraternity' means. I always felt special when he called me "Dr. Sandy" or, later, "President Sandy" - because I realized what an honorific title that was coming from him. On behalf of myself and the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of students whose lives were transformed by his gentle hand, I give thanks for his life.

Sandy Alspach - April 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM

SD

“ I am sorry and surprised to hear of Dr. Derryberry's passing. He was a great teacher. He is with his LORD now.

Sandra M. Dubro - April 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM

AA

“ I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to learn under him. He was a great teacher and a great man. My heart goes out to your family. I just lost my dad in Jan at age 70, so I know how hard it is. You will be in my prayers.

Amanda Anderson - April 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM