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A Life of Scholarship and Service to the Communication Discipline: Celebrating Lawrence W. Hugenberg

Jeffrey T. Child

On the one-year anniversary of Larry's unexpected passing on August 11, 2008, there is perhaps no more appropriate place to celebrate his many contributions to the communication discipline than within the pages of the *Basic Communication Course Annual* (BCCA). As Sam Wallace and many others noted on the Basic Course Listserv, Larry's passing provides an opportunity to "celebrate a significant life." Larry earned his Ph.D. at The Ohio State University in 1981, and in addition to his distinguished teaching career, he was the founding editor of the BCCA, and served two terms as associate editor of the annual, devoting much energy to educating and assisting others in the refinement of their scholarly writing in addition to their research conceptualization, measurement, and analysis skills. The scope of Larry's mentoring, generosity, and guidance to countless individuals in the field extends far beyond the BCCA; he also served as the associate editor for several of our field's preeminent journals, including *Communication Education*, *Communication Teacher*, *Communication Studies*, *The Journal of Communication Studies*, and *The Ohio Speech Journal*.

Larry was a champion of progressive thinking in the discipline, publishing more than 50 scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles and edited book chapters and

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presenting over 150 papers at academic and professional conferences. To note that Larry had a deep passion for effective undergraduate education is an understatement. Larry served on the faculty of Youngstown State University for 26 years before joining the faculty at Kent State University. At the time of his passing, he served as the undergraduate coordinator for the School of Communication Studies. Over the course of his career, he taught more than 50 different courses in communication, advised graduate and undergraduate students, and was the recipient of several distinguished teaching awards. He and his wife (Dr. Barbara S. Hugenberg) edited *Teaching Ideas for the Basic Communication Course* for eleven consecutive years. Larry was at the forefront of technology, communication, and instruction by creating both an electronic and a paperback version of the textbook *Creating Competent Communication*.

Larry is more than the sum of his professional and academic accomplishments. His enthusiasm and interest in others was energetic and contagious. Larry always had time for his colleagues, students, and advisees. He was constantly thinking about new research opportunities, projects, and collaborations that would be beneficial to others and to the discipline. His selfless and well-rounded nature is unparalleled. Larry's legacy is demonstrated through the many memories shared and reflected by others after his passing on the basic course director's listserv and his legacy.com online guestbook. Here are some of those memorials:

Larry's advisor, Dr. John MaKay, noted, "In addition to academics we played golf together, shared rooms at conventions, hit some of the campus and non-campus

pubs in Columbus, and we came to know each other's families as well. Larry was always laughing, and communicating with a unique spirit that made him a very special human being. As the years have gone by I have watched his professional growth with pride and I always looked forward to the next time we would see each other."

A doctoral advisee of Larry's, Amy Dalessandro, adds that, "No matter how busy he was, Larry always found time to talk and give some words of encouragement. He always gave good, honest advice. He emphasized that though school and career are important, having a life and a happy family is important too... Larry made people feel like they belonged."

Kristen Treinen, at Minnesota State University, Mankato noted shortly after his passing that "Just last week during GTA training, I related to my new TAs something I had once heard Larry say that has stuck with me. I was saddened to tell them this morning of his passing."

Bill Seiler, at University of Nebraska, Lincoln shared the following thoughts about Larry, "As most of us know it takes a very special breed to be a successful teacher, researcher, and basic course director— and Larry was all of these and more. ... Larry always had this wonderful smile and calm demeanor that just made you want to hug the guy. He did so much for the basic course and he did without expecting anything for it. I will truly miss Larry—he was a true friend, a wonderful colleague and a joy to be around. He will be missed but his contributions to the discipline and the basic course will live on forever."

Glen Williams, at Southeast Missouri State University, commented about Larry's vigor and support of moving the communication discipline forward, "Larry also often led the charge to defend what we do, knowing full well its integrity and value. With an agile mind and lively style, he'd leap onto the larger stage when necessary—a true champion. I've enjoyed going back and reading some of these installments in *Comm. Ed.* and *Spectra*. If you're like me, you hear that robust voice whenever you read his words."

Scott Titsworth, at Ohio University, discusses how Larry impacted his career and the work in instructional communication and the basic course divisions, "As I think about Larry I would describe him as someone who transcended his own institution to impact an entire area in the discipline. Larry was the editor who published my very first peer-reviewed article, and I know that many of us can say that. As a professional, Larry will always be a mentor, for his desire for high quality, theoretically interesting, and practically useful scholarship will endure so long as there are outlets for basic course scholarship. Larry was giving of his time, expertise, and compassion as an editor and because of that our discipline has benefited in ways that we will only now probably take a moment to reflect on. I agree with Sam, we need to celebrate and show gratitude for everything that he did for each of us."

Don Yoder, a close friend of Larry's at the University of Dayton, commented that, "Larry was a good friend whom I will miss. I sit at night and think of all the good times we had in grad school and as professional colleagues. I will miss Larry beating me in backgammon, and cribbage, and poker, and basketball and well every-

thing we ever did—he was certainly the luckiest person that ever played a game or made a bet. ... The emails being exchanged are witness to the wide range of people who counted Larry as a friend and whose lives he touched in a positive way. What better legacy can a person have?"

As a colleague and a friend of Larry's, I will forever be indebted to him for his guidance, generosity, and genuine concern for the growth of my own career and scholarship. Larry left an inspiring legacy, indeed. May we all strive to emulate the character, work-ethic, mentoring spirit, and respect for others embraced and emulated by Larry as we celebrate his scholarship and service to the Communication Discipline.