





# Students I remember

*Last year we asked readers to tell us about their favorite professors. For this issue, we turned the tables on that theme and asked professors to tell us about students who had an impact on them. They wrote in with stories of students who displayed dedication and passion, students who made them laugh, and even students who taught them a thing or two. Some professors identified entire classes that inspired them. Here's a sampling of the students and classes they will never forget.*

Edited by KAREN WALLINGFORD



I can remember the face of almost every student I've taught, some more vividly than others, funny things that happened in class, but not what grade I might have given a student. I've had first-time college students of all ages, including retirees like **Leo Cote '84** who took classes for the sheer joy of discussion and being around people; the sons and daughters of colleagues and friends; students who would become my colleagues, marry my colleagues, or become lifelong friends; Air Force members and dependents; and prison guards and prison inmates, whom I could always count on for surprising views of traditional material, like the class that unanimously defended Roger Chillingworth (*The Scarlet Letter*) as a wronged husband and the one that condemned Huck Finn as a juvenile delinquent.

I have had parents and their children as my students, particularly mothers and sons, but not necessarily in that order; identical twins in one class who did not get identical grades; students who later became my own children's teachers; and a host of students from various ethnic backgrounds—the one with the most interesting last name I thought was a misprint because it had no vowels (actually it had one toward the end, Mrstik).

I have had literature classes from five to seventy students, a class of twenty whose roster spanned last names from Abba to Zyble, technical writing classes that generated an award-winning report on leach fields, which was later implemented by a local community, and a proposal for a male escort service in Marquette, complete with full-scale models, which was not implemented. My students have been members of just about every sport and club at NMU. Many have taken more than one class from me, some as undergraduates and graduates, so I have had the joy of watching them grow. To single out one or two would demean the others. That I cannot do, for each has been special, unique, a treasure. Some of them are no longer with us. They are in my prayers. Some I see around town even today. I look forward to those I have not met yet, for I am not yet done.

— *Ray Ventre*  
English

**Mike Spaude '77 BS** (SP 203 Public Address) was a business major, and a physically large young man. When he spoke of food, people listened. He gave the very best student speech I ever heard—"How to Make Substantial Food in Your Dorm Room Late at Night,"—during which he demonstrated how to cook hot dogs with a desk lamp. He thus produced an example of demonstration speaking that I used for over 20 years. I understand that Mike is currently a businessman in Wisconsin, and I suspect his passion for hot dogs has not diminished.

**Ray Hoover '91 BS** (SP 203 Public Address) did something I thought not possible when he stretched the topic "How to Make a Peanut Butter Sandwich" into a full eight-minute speech, and a good one at that. He now operates a tree trimming enterprise in Marquette. If you hire him to work on your trees, I suggest first getting a price quote for the job. Do not hire him by the hour...

— *Robert Dornquast (Retired)*  
*Communications and Performance Studies*

**Di (Wu) Hlawek '95 BS** was an excellent student who graduated with an accounting/CIS major, worked for Arthur Anderson, an international public accounting firm, completed her master of business administration

at Harvard Business School, and now works for Verizon Wireless in Chicago.

Di is the only student I remember who would stop in my office to commiserate with me regarding how poorly that semester's Cost Accounting class was doing. Di was scoring nearly 100 percent, while the rest of the class was scoring substantially below that level, so we would brainstorm things that could be done to bring the rest of the class nearer to her level. There were approximately 10 times during the course of the semester that she dropped in and we put our heads together to improve class performance. Even though we didn't achieve much success in our combined effort, I very much appreciated her stopping in to uplift me that semester.

In my 29 years of teaching, she is the only student who voluntarily dropped by several times to attempt to upgrade the class performance because she knew it was not having a positive effect on my psyche.

— Frederick Margrif (*Retired*)  
Walker L. Cisler College of Business

**David Martin '88 MS** holds the laboratory record for animated speed talking, but there were a few times I remember him falling silent when a comment seemed appropriate. One of these rare moments occurred as we hunkered into a divot chopped into the snow at the summit of Mt. Baker in the Washington Cascade mountains. We were there to study the effects of mountaineering activities on red blood cell hemolysis, and David was to perform venipunctures on seven subjects at the summit. It was just after 8 a.m. and the wind howled over the frozen peak. We had just spent 5 1/2 hours climbing over 6,000 feet from base camp. David had all of the supplies ready, except for the antiseptic solution to clean the puncture sites. It had been forgotten as we left camp in the dark at 2 a.m. for the climb to the summit. David announced the error and then fell silent as his mind calculated the risk of sticking needles into the dirty arms of climbers who had not bathed in four days. Although unstated, I could feel him calculating the options in his mind: "Do it! No, bag it! But there will be no other chance. This is a funded project! Ethics..." Finally, someone pulled the first-aid kit out of a pack and found a bottle of the precious liquid to save the day—and Dave's torment.

Another memorable silence came during our ground-breaking anthropometry study of elite competitive rock climbers at an international event in Utah. David's task was to measure skinfolds, in triplicate, from seven anatomical sites. One of the sites was the front of the thigh. A group of seven or so attractive French and Belgian female climbers had arrived wearing tights instead of shorts. We wanted to be precise with the measurements, so David began explaining how they would need to leave and change into shorts. Without delay, the climbers shrugged and dropped their tights to their ankles. David fell silent, but dutifully went about getting his measurements. Off to the side, a male climber waiting to get measured, mumbled in broken English, "I cannot take deez," and left the room.

David went on to receive his doctorate in physiology from the University of Wyoming and now works as a senior physiologist with the Australian Institute of Sport, primarily with Australia's Olympic cyclists.

— Phil Watts  
*Health, Physical Education, and Recreation*

In seven years of teaching, the most focused, determined, and motivated student I have ever encountered was **Priscilla Jandron '98 CER**. Without breaching confidentiality, I will just say that Priscilla was past the age of even a non-traditional student. Life's circumstances had made it imperative that she find a tolerable way to make a living, and luckily she chose nursing. She quickly discovered that the "new" math requirements in my Basic Pharmacology course completely overwhelmed her capabilities. But Priscilla was focused. Priscilla was determined. Week after week, she took meticulous notes, worked on CD-ROM exercises, set up individual work sessions, and immersed herself in drug calculations.

Priscilla made it through my course only to face a year of strenuous nursing clinicals and lectures. Even for the most academically prepared student, nursing school demands a minimum of 32 hours a week of on-site clinical practice as well as 20 hours of theoretical study. For Priscilla to succeed, she had to sacrifice any life outside of school. I don't know if she knew this, but the entire faculty was cheering for her. We witnessed the

caring, compassionate, and gentle care she provided to patients and watched her struggle to comprehend as theoretical material became more and more complex. Priscilla attended every class, continued to take meticulous notes, frequently requested and met with instructors, completed every extra assignment, and thoroughly immersed herself in nursing school.

Recently, a colleague went through the heartrending process of watching her father die of prostate cancer, and despite her strong medical background, she found herself overwhelmed and angry at the cold and sterile hospital environment her father was forced to endure. She reported afterward that one LPN had offered solace in her calm and gentle care—NMU LPN graduate Priscilla Jandron.

— Kristi Robinia  
Nursing

**Bob Schad '71 BA, '73 MA** arrived on campus around 1970 after a stint with the armed forces in Europe and the Mediterranean area. Bob had a unique form of dress—a long, dark, shaggy fur coat of undetermined origin, a cassock hat, and a beard—also on the shaggy side. He was a good student although I expect studies were not at the top of his priority list. He taught Russian—not a popular language at the time—informally to interested students in the late afternoon. During one semester he worked with Dr. Curt Hamre testing the speech, language, and hearing abilities of inmates at the Marquette prison. On more than one occasion there was some concern about Bob's appearance and possible retention in that fine institution.

Bob graduated with a master's degree in speech pathology and found work in Saskatchewan, Canada. Some years later I received a postcard from Cambodia in which he mentioned his lack of knowledge regarding local hostilities and his sudden friendship with the more hospitable natives. Fortunately he was en route to an island off the coast of India to study meditation with monks. He has worked in the Regina area over the past 25 plus years in a variety of positions involving education and technology, and he

now represents the University of Regina as a senior policy strategist. Bob dropped me a note as I was writing this saying he was off to Ghana to do a workshop for the World Bank and then on to Gambia to start a documentary on the James Island Project. I never know where the next postcard might come from!

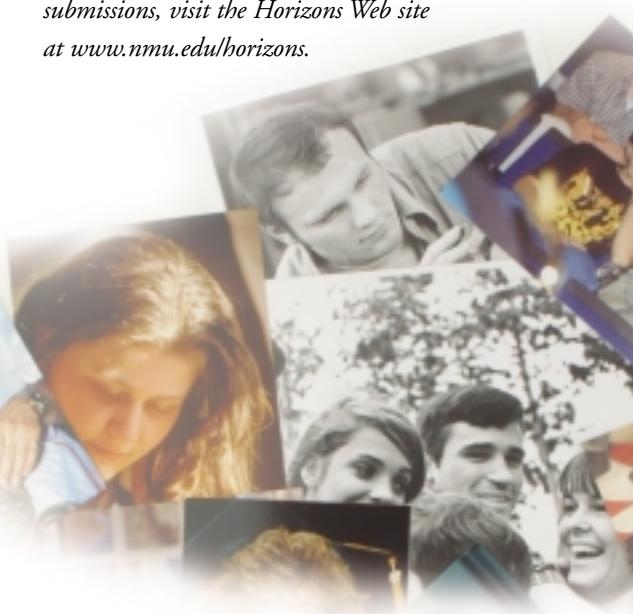
I went to visit Bob and his family a few years ago. If you look very carefully you can still see a hint of that scruffy 60s attire and attitude beneath the current polished and sophisticated professional image.

— Peter B. Smith  
*Communication Disorders*

The task is impossible: I simply cannot pick out one or two memorable students that graced my life for more than two decades at Northern. If I talk about Diane, what about Kristen or Nancy or the seven enthusiastic young women named Lori? If I portray Bill, then how can I leave out Mick or Michael? We were a team, a happy band of warriors marching forth to serve those with speech disorders. And they all ride gentle in my mind. And so I say this: To all former students great and small, bright and beautiful, wise and wonderful—this old professor loves you all.

— Lon Emerick (*Retired*)  
*Communication Disorders*

*Editor's Note: To read all of the unedited submissions, visit the Horizons Web site at [www.nmu.edu/horizons](http://www.nmu.edu/horizons).*



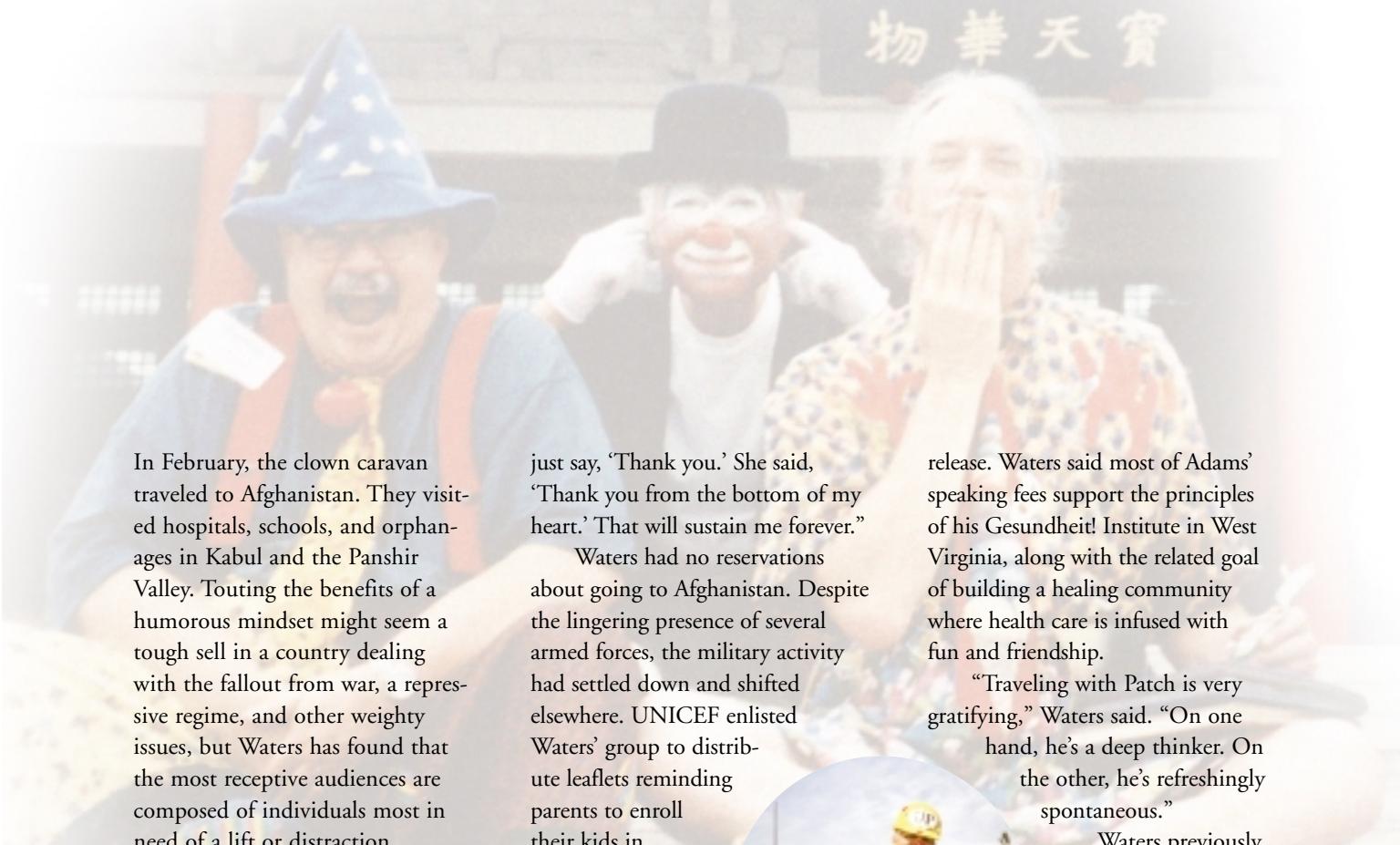
# Laughing matters

By KRISTI EVANS



**W**hen Bill Waters greets you, it's with a handshake and a smile... not to mention one of those bright-red, foam clown noses.

The retired criminal justice professor dispenses these lighthearted tokens wherever he travels. Not surprising, given the company he keeps. Waters has volunteered for three international goodwill missions led by Patch Adams, the doctor whose unconventional and outrageous bedside manner was the basis for a movie starring Robin Williams.



In February, the clown caravan traveled to Afghanistan. They visited hospitals, schools, and orphanages in Kabul and the Panjshir Valley. Touting the benefits of a humorous mindset might seem a tough sell in a country dealing with the fallout from war, a repressive regime, and other weighty issues, but Waters has found that the most receptive audiences are composed of individuals most in need of a lift or distraction.

"Humor is a universal language, and there's an intense energy that goes along with sharing it," he said. "All of us in the group were on the same wavelength. There was no agenda but to bring lightheartedness to everyone we came in contact with."

He recalled a visit to a girl's school, where he handed out a Number 2 pencil and a marker to each student. This would not trigger much of a reaction from most kids, but one young girl approached him with a radiant smile. "She didn't



Pictured at top of page: Bill Waters (center) poses with a fellow clown from New Jersey (left) and Patch Adams (right). Pictured above: A young Afghan boy shows off his mementos from the clown entourage.

just say, 'Thank you.' She said, 'Thank you from the bottom of my heart.' That will sustain me forever."

Waters had no reservations about going to Afghanistan. Despite the lingering presence of several armed forces, the military activity had settled down and shifted elsewhere. UNICEF enlisted Waters' group to distribute leaflets reminding parents to enroll their kids in schools that had just reopened. He and his clown colleagues rode in pickup-truck beds through neighborhoods, often followed by a throng of curious residents.

"We had a celebration in the very stadium where the Taliban—only months earlier—had executed people," he said. "Thousands of people turned out. The clowns passed out free kites to kids and whoever else wanted them. Kite flying is a very popular activity in Afghanistan, but it was banned by the Taliban," Waters said.

Patch Adams made an early departure from the mission to fulfill some prior speaking engagements. The "laughter is contagious" guru has been in high demand since the movie's 1998

release. Waters said most of Adams' speaking fees support the principles of his Gesundheit! Institute in West Virginia, along with the related goal of building a healing community where health care is infused with fun and friendship.

"Traveling with Patch is very gratifying," Waters said. "On one hand, he's a deep thinker. On the other, he's refreshingly spontaneous."

Waters previously accompanied Adams to China and Siberia. He invests more than time in these missions; participants cover their own expenses. The clown caravan just completed a Trans-Siberian Railway excursion from Moscow to Vladivostok.

Riding the rails seems an appropriate mode of travel for Waters. After all, he has embraced the hobo as his clown persona of choice.

"When someone decides to try clowning, they're drawn to one of four types," Waters explained. "The whiteface, which essentially is a mime who relies on physical forms of expression; the Auguste, a Ronald McDonald type who is a variation of the whiteface and has more expressive powers; the hobo, who has been rejected by some element of society but is determined to make a life of his own; and the tramp, a variation of the hobo in that he wants to do whatever it



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takes to be accepted again.”

Waters said he learned everything he needed to know about life at Clown Camp. Each summer, hundreds of people make the jolly pilgrimage to the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse for what's billed as the largest clown training program in the world. It is also the oldest, having just completed its 22nd year. Many of the instructors are past or present Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey performers.

Waters enrolled in the 1999 session. A few days after graduating, Patch Adams recruited him for the China mission. It was an opportunity he simply could not pass up—one that would give his life new direction and purpose.

Ironically, perhaps, humor did not come early or easily for Waters. “The sad part about it is,” he said shaking his head, “I have lived most of my life being dead serious. I wouldn’t be where I am with this humor thing if I hadn’t been where I was with the serious attitude.”

Waters said he started to lighten up in 1996 after he and NMU colleague John Andrews attended a major criminal justice conference in Boston. They agreed there was nothing new or interesting to take back to the classroom and the prevailing attitude among many in the profession was rather bleak. Determined to “knock the socks off” attendees the next year, the two wrote a paper and deliv-

ered a presentation on the role of humor in criminal justice.

“There wasn’t enough space to hold everyone who wanted to come,” Waters said. “People approached us afterward and said, ‘Where have you guys been? This is what we want to hear.’ We knew we were onto something.”

Within three years, the duo adopted the moniker Court Jesters, and their 20-minute presentation evolved into a six-hour workshop that they marketed internationally.

“Our message wasn’t that criminal justice professionals should yell it up, tell jokes, and laugh all the time,” Waters explained. “Those are merely responses to what we find funny. Humor is perspective. It’s having a lighter attitude and an ability to be flexible about how you see things and how you respond to them.”

Waters said the perception that criminal justice and humor are incompatible is driven more by myth than reality. He cites figures from the U.S. Department of Justice that show police officers devote 10 percent of their average shift to crime and criminals.

“That means the remaining 90 percent is service delivery—connecting with people as a public servant,” Waters said. “Do you want someone in that role who thinks it’s all dead serious? An officer making a traffic stop doesn’t have to put his hands on his leather, throw his weight around and say, ‘You were breaking the law;

that’s bad.’ He could he walk up to the car with a smile on his face and say, ‘Nice car. Fast, too.’”

Waters said the take-home point of their workshop is that criminal justice work is not about being serious; it’s about being responsible. His commitment to this philosophy is obvious as the intensity of his voice vaults a few notches.

“If you look up the words in the dictionary, serious means somber, solemn, or fraught with something,” he explains. “Responsible means accountable, able to, or liable. Isn’t that what the work is about? It’s all a matter of separating what is serious from what is responsible. You can do your work responsibly with a humorous mindset.”

Waters said his Court Jesters and clowning pursuits have been therapeutic.

“The more I do, the more I come to believe that life is a hoot. I don’t take myself or anybody else nearly as seriously as I used to, and I’m much more open to criticism. I’m more willing to laugh at myself and give others the benefit of the doubt.”

There’s also the physiological benefit. Waters said 30 seconds of hearty belly laughter is equal to the cardiovascular workout of three minutes on a rowing machine. Who needs a gym when you can travel with Patch Adams and have your heart pumped and touched at the same time? ■