

Which way to the psycho-ceramics lecture? Only the mysterious Professor Carberry knows.



DON'T MYTH OUT

YOU GET AN AUTOMATIC 4.0 if your roommate dies. Students nationwide have passed this tale around for years. The fact that it isn't true hasn't stopped them. But hey, isn't that the nature of a myth?

ETC.

Call it studentlore — the fiction or stranger-than-fiction that bonds students at a particular college. Here's some of the most enduring:

Harvard U. keeps afloat the rumor of required swimming lessons. It's true that on April 16, 1912, the Titanic sank and that Eleanor Wiedner's son, a Harvard student, drowned. It's also true that in her son's memory, Wiedner donated money to Harvard for a library (now known as Wiedner Library).

But contrary to what Harvard students have believed since then, it isn't true that Wiedner attached a stipulation requiring all students to pass a swim test. Lessons are merely encouraged for students who want to participate in water sports, says a source in the Harvard news office.

At Duke U. in North Carolina, a 3-foot stone wall surrounds the former women's campus (from when the men's and women's campuses were separate). According to the myth, endowment benefactor James B. Duke stipulated in his will that a 10-foot wall separate the men from the women. But the rebel builders got around that requirement — by putting 7 feet below ground.

Hit or myth?

Now, see if you can tell fact from fiction. True or false:

- The U. of Maryland, College Park, awarded a doctorate — in health and human performance — to a dead woman. (True, in 1994, to *Rafaela Coello*, who was 84 when she died.)
- Famed U. of Notre Dame football coach Knute Rockne really told his players, "Win one for the Gipper." (False. His actual words were: "The day before he died, [Notre Dame football player] George Gipp asked me to wait until the situation seemed hopeless — then ask a Notre Dame team to go out and beat Army for him. This is the day, and you are the team.")
- About the only thing that can get you out of class is a natural disaster. (True. Washington State U. canceled classes for four days in 1980 when Mount Saint Helens erupted; classes at the U. of Miami were canceled for a month in 1926 because of a hurricane; Hanover College lost 32 of its 33 buildings and a week of classes in 1974 when a tornado swept through Indiana.)

The truth: What you see is what you get. "It's just ornamental," says David Roberson of Duke's public affairs office.

Students at Brown U. are still awaiting the emergence of professor Josiah S. Carberry. Evidence of Carberry, a fictitious character believed to have been created by a Brown professor, first surfaced in 1929. A notice was posted advertising Carberry's lecture on psychoceramics — the study of cracked pots — to be held in University Hall.

Every Friday the 13th since, fliers have appeared around campus touting the mystery lecture. A room is always reserved — but no one shows up for Carberry's speech. That's part of the tradition, too.

At Yale U. and the U. of Florida, truth has become legendary.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. — perhaps the nation's most revered war mon-

ument — is a product of Maya Ying Lin, who was a senior at Yale when her contest entry for the memorial design won in 1981. Lin first designed the memorial as a class project. Her professor, Andy Burr, also submitted a blueprint, but Lin won the contest and the \$20,000 prize. Burr gave her a "B."

Because the tropical heat often dehydrated the U. of Florida football players, Robert Cade, a professor of medicine and kidney research at the university, chose the pigskin handlers as guinea pigs for his new drink. Now known as Gatorade — sorry, not GatorCade — the drink was a hit with the football players. It was named for their mascot, the Gator, and the university receives a portion of Gatorade profits.

Kathleen Seiler, Syracuse U./Photo by John Forasté, Brown U.

BOOKSTORE BACKLASH

IT'S AS CERTAIN AS DEATH AND TAXES — SHELLING OUT BIG BUCKS FOR textbooks. Traditionally, students have cut their losses in part by reselling their books at the end of the semester. Bookstores, wholesalers and used-book clearinghouses are the most frequent buyers, but they rarely pay even 50 percent of the retail price.

"It's at the buyback where they screw you," says U. of Alabama senior Stacy Cohen. "When they buy it back, it's like, 'Here's your \$3. Hope you learned what you had to learn.'"

To make matters worse, bookstores often refuse to buy back certain texts after professors opt to change the edition used in their courses.

Fortunately for students, there are alternatives to the traditional bookstore.

Cohen and some friends are planning to open an alternative bookstore on the Alabama campus. She says her group hopes to pay students half of the original purchase price for all books.

"We're trying to put together a jazz hall with an art gallery and an alternative bookstore upstairs," Cohen says. "There's not really a bookstore here that sells new and used classics and has the texts right there, too."

MaryPIRG, the campus public interest group at the U. of Maryland, holds a book swap at which students can trade their old texts for credit toward new ones.

But even the alternatives pose problems. "Sometimes you wait for the book swap, and then they don't have what you need," says Maryland senior Matt Ramsdell. "So you end up going to the bookstore anyway."

Another alternative, offered at Eastern Illinois U., is a school-run textbook-rental system. A fee of about \$5 per credit hour is added to students' bills when they register for classes. Although some courses require more books than others, university officials say the fees even out over four years.

"We've really gotten positive feedback," says Donna Dawson, textbook-rental clerk at EIU, "especially from transfer students who come here and are amazed that they don't have to spend hundreds of dollars on books."

The U. of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, and the U. of Wisconsin, Stout, sponsor similar textbook-leasing programs, and at the U. of Minnesota, Duluth, student-run organizations buy used texts for charity.

Just remember — if you look hard enough, you'll be able to hit your books harder than they hit your wallet.

Dan Avery, U. of Maryland, College Park/Photo by Aaron Latham, U. of Arizona



Sheesh! Getting caught in the bookstore trap could cost you an arm and a leg.