

A chapter in history closes

Dr. Donald Epstein retires after thirty years of teaching

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Opinion Editor

Dr. Donald Epstein, social sciences instructor, will retire at the end of winter term and shelve his history books forever.

Epstein began as a part-time instructor in 1969. When he started his career at Clackamas he was still going to school at the University of Oregon. He earned his BA at New York University and received his MS degree at the University of Michigan. After two years at Clackamas he conquered his studies for a Ph.D. at the University of Oregon. However, Epstein did note there was some lag time in between, due to "economic change" or more accurately, "I ran out of money," said Epstein.

"Instead of wasting my time on the street corners, I wasted my time in school," said Epstein.

Epstein has been married to his wife Katharine "for several years." She has been by his side for the duration of his time at Clackamas.

Epstein has been at Clackamas for more than 30 years and in that time he has seen many changes take place. He has seen the Art Department in the old Smuckers factory. He's seen that same factory go up in smoke.

When he first came to Clackamas there were four buildings: Randall, Barlow, McLoughlin and Clairmont. They had modular buildings down where the jail is, on Warner Milne Road. Since he has been here, buildings have been added, older ones have been remodeled and walls have been knocked out.

"I've seen this college gutted out," said Epstein.

Epstein has been the sole contact for the Holocaust survivors who visit this campus every year.

"I wouldn't be here if not for Dr. Epstein," said Eline Hoekstra, Holocaust survivor, in reference to her visit on Feb. 14.

For years Epstein has been known as a man of many words and even more opinions, but that is what many students have



FILE PHOTOS/ Clackamas Print

The above pictures of Dr. Donald Epstein were taken from the 1971-72 CCC yearbook and May 3, 1995 edition of the Print.

come to know and love about this man.

"I've ruffled a lot of feathers through the years," said Epstein.

Many students have been enthralled during his lectures as he refers to Cleopatra as a "bitch," while others have been offended. Some students have sat astounded at his teachings and knowledge about history. He has been known as a demanding, but thorough instructor.

"Epstein teaches with inspiration and demands his students to critique and analyze history," said Tim Ruppel, architecture major. He's currently enrolled in History of Western Civilization with Epstein as the instructor.

Among his colleagues and friends he is considered a great scholar. He is well known for his knowledge of history and his heart as a person.

"He clearly knows his stuff," said Dean Darris, political science instructor.

"I am impressed with the caliber of him as a historian," said Jackie Flowers, history instructor.

Epstein has taught various classes on history since he has been at Clackamas, including History of Western Civilization and Judaic Studies.

"History of Western Civilization is my favorite class," said Epstein.

Many instructors and students commented on Epstein's efforts to make new colleagues and old friends feel welcome.

When Jackie Flowers came to Clackamas she flew cross-country for an interview with Epstein. She was overwhelmed with his compassion toward her.

"I really appreciated it. It was far more than I expected anyone to do," said Flowers.

During his years at Clackamas, Epstein invited students to his house for dinners and lectures.

He has also been famous for inviting the social science department over for Hanukkah parties.

"He would open his home and his heart," said Loren Ford, social sciences instructor. "Regardless of faculty and students' rights Don's a really good guy."

Epstein is known for his ability to just pull up a chair and begin conversation with anyone. He is an easygoing, free-spirited guy, according to some colleagues.

"I've certainly enjoyed chatting with him," said Robert Keeler, anthropology instructor.

Some students felt he challenged them; he was at times a more difficult instructor, but they say that's what they loved about him.

"I think Epstein really knows his history. It's a shame that he won't be teaching anymore," said Kimberly Blazejewski, biology major.

"I think Epstein has a lot of insight on topics he lectures on. I enjoy lectures and learn more that way," said Eileen Brito, education major.

Epstein officially retired on March 1, 2000,

but will remain at Clackamas to finish out the term. Details of his retirement plans are not yet finalized.

"Hopefully, everything will work out," said Epstein.

Epstein's plans after retirement include going to London over the summer. While in London he will attend a conference that is held to remember the Holocaust.

When asked if he had any final thoughts to share before he retires, Epstein was philosophical.

"There's a lesson to be learned. Rights are pretty precious; if you deny them to one person, you deny them to everyone. Where's the next inquisition going to fall?"

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Tim Ruppel
Architecture Major