

Professor Robert B. Glassman's Legacy on Lake Forest College

Fatima Hooda & Reshma Kurian

Department of Biology
Lake Forest College
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045

One of the most cherished faculty members of Lake Forest College, Professor Robert B. Glassman, passed away last spring on April 27, 2013. Professor Glassman was one of the founding fathers of the neuroscience department. While Lake Forest College continues to suffer this tremendous loss, it is important to reflect upon the great legacy Dr. Glassman left on our institution.

In memory of Dr. Glassman's legacy, the college chose to honor Dr. Glassman by naming the annual Brain Awareness Week Symposium after him. The Robert B. Glassman Symposium this year featured faculty, alumni, and undergraduate poster presentations in a variety of subjects, reflecting Professor Glassman's zeal for knowledge.

In his speech at the symposium, Dean of Faculty and Provost Dr. Michael T. Orr described Professor Glassman's passion for learning and teaching.

"Bob was not someone who was restricted by definitions of disciplines or departments," said Provost Orr, "The remarkable breadth of presentations all here tonight -english department, philosophy department, communication department, theatre department psych department-that breadth, I think mirrors Bob's own breadth of interest fascination across disciplinary boundary."

Many remember Professor Glassman by his genuine interest in his student's learning process. Mrs. Harriet Glassman, wife of Professor Glassman, evoked memories of the late professor's dedication to his profession.

"Many times when Bob came home, he would tell me about how proud and excited he was when his students would figure out an issue, when they got it, when they posed challenging questions, or when they wrote a great paper," said Mrs. Glassman, "Bob took teaching very seriously. He tried to make clear exactly what he did not know from what he did know. As he said, 'My students and I, then, learned together.'"

Professor Glassman spent 44 years teaching at Lake Forest College. He is remembered by numerous students in the psychology and neuroscience departments.

Senior and Synapse co-president Crystal Ramirez remembers his unique personality.

"I had the pleasure of working with Dr. Glassman for a summer my junior year where I was able to see the fun-loving, goofy side of him", said Ramirez, "if you've ever had a class with him, you know what I'm talking about. I enjoyed working with Dr. Glassman because everything we did had some sort of significance to him which ignited a passion for our research."

A fellow colleague of the late professor, Dr. Matthew R. Kelley, reminisced about his experiences and how he was impacted by Professor Glassman. Professor Kelley shared an anecdote where he asked Professor Glassman a question, and was blown away by his perspective.

"When he first got there [in the lecture room], he started talking about something else- whatever was on his mind - which is kind of classic Bob," said Professor Kelley, "and so I asked a question and then he just completely surprised me. He answered it in a way I'd never thought of the question. This was supposed to be a basic memory type question. In that moment though, I was a

student, like all my other students in the class. I was just listening and I was learning and it became a conversation and some other students became involved. And I had a plan for the course --the class, it was nothing like that, but it was so much better."

Not only was Professor Glassman an asset to the College, but also he served as a role model to students and faculty. Professor Kelley shared that he learned tremendously from Professor Glassman and would like to emulate characteristics in his own teaching style.

Professor Kelley said "I think that unconditional support is one of the things I try to strive for [students]. But Bob never put limits on creativeness. He had a bunch of different ways with students. I think I need to be a little more like that." Professor Kelley discusses the traits that Professor Glassman had to help students and get them to get better by guiding them into the right direction. Overall, Professor Kelley looked up to Professor Glassman with complete respect and admiration.

As former students of Professor Glassman, we would like to take time to acknowledge his time and endless efforts of making the college, the community, and the world a much better place. A quote by William Arthur Ward describes, "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." Professor Glassman has been more than an inspiration. His life serves as a continuous value towards the passion for learning, service to others, while living life to the fullest. Professor Glassman will be dearly missed. May his soul continue to rest in peace.



Dr. Robert B. Glassman Professor of Psychology 1974-2013

Note: Eukaryon is published by students at Lake Forest College, who are solely responsible for its content. The views expressed in Eukaryon do not necessarily reflect those of the College. Articles published within Eukaryon should not be cited in bibliographies. Material contained herein should be treated as personal communication and should be cited as such only with the consent of the author.