

Clippings

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Quiet Loyalty

Last November I had the chance to participate in a party honoring Bob Emmons on the occasion of his retirement from SUNY Cobleskill. Who would have thought that such a quiet unassuming guy would have touched so many lives. The litany of praise from former students had me choked up for most of the evening. Bob was loyal to us and now this was our chance to let him know how his belief in us, his quiet loyalty, made a difference in our lives.

I feel fortunate to have a forum to write about Bob, but to be honest I wouldn't have this forum if he hadn't inspired me 25 years ago. His inspiration wasn't the passionate and vocal "rah-rah" kind rather it was the quiet kind. I remember feeling that Bob really listened to me and for an 18-20 year old, it might have been the first time I felt that anyone listened to me.

I've spent many long trips over the years with Bob traveling to speaking engagements, visiting students, a few times finding a fishing hole and volunteering at the US Open at Bethpage in 2002. Getting to know him has been one of the great joys of my life, not just professionally but personally as well.

Here's a guy that was about to embark upon an Ivy League law career and instead enlists in a war that most people didn't want any part of. An educated guy as a squad leader, reminds me of the Matt Modine's character in Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*. I don't really know if loyalty and patriotism are the same thing, but something motivated this quiet guy to make the sacrifice because he thought it was the right thing to do, only to get spit on when he returned to the US.

Next thing you know, after a brief and not memorable stint as a golf course superintendent he is studying with Bill Knoop at the University of New Hampshire. Of all places he and his lovely bride Holly end up in Cobleskill and the rest is history.

As an advisor myself now I often think about how Bob listened to me and how that made me feel like what I thought mattered. I remember feeling that it was the work and your effort that mattered not that you came from a big "turf program". It is an honor for me to work with people in this industry knowing that I have a

responsibility to inspire others to find the talent they have within just like Bob inspired me.

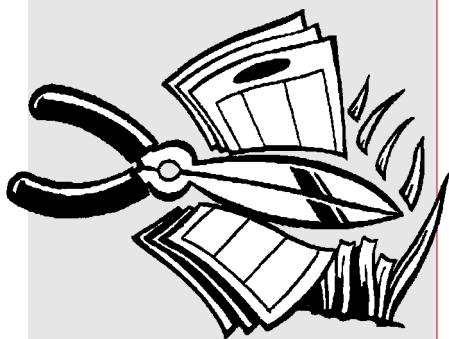
In some ways now that he is retired I have my own quiet loyalty to the ideals I learned from him. Not just about turf but about life as well. It is truly the end of an era at Cobleskill but I am sure Alex Ellram is the kind of guy that will begin a new and successful era. I am sure because Bob told me so and that kind of loyalty doesn't come around very often.

Frank S. Rossi, Ph.D.

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