

Class Dismissed

Ratcliffe helped to build reputation of TROY accounting program

By Tom Davis

On the corner of Dr. Tom Ratcliffe's desk, a book offers a glimpse into the philosophy of its owner. The title: "Thank God it's Monday."

Dr. Ratcliffe, who has served Troy University's Sorrell College of Business since 1986 as a Professor, Eminent Scholar, Dean and now as Director of the School of Accountancy, has always embraced a demanding work schedule. Beginning in August, Dr. Ratcliffe will undergo a major change in his routine. For the first time in almost two decades, he will no longer teach at TROY.

"It's time to go," Dr. Ratcliffe said. "If I am ever going to get to do some of these things on a national level, I need to do them now."

"These things," Dr. Ratcliffe referred to include chairing national committees of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants helping to formulate policies and practices of the profession.

Dr. Ratcliffe will also continue his association with Wilson Price Certified Public Accountants and



Consultants. And, he will continue teaching continuing education seminars through the Alabama Society of Certified Public Accountants and the American Institute of CPAs.

Dr. Ratcliffe's TROY story began long before he joined the faculty of the Sorrell College. He came to the University in 1970 as a freshman "country boy" from Camden.

"Other than going to Pensacola to the beach, I had never left the State of Alabama," Dr. Ratcliffe said. "I went to Tuscaloosa to look around and I realized that the campus over there was five times bigger than my hometown. I came to TROY and everyone was real nice, so I decided to come here."

Dr. Ratcliffe would return to Tuscaloosa to earn his master's and Ph.D. degrees, but he received his formative accounting education at TROY, specifically from Mr. Eugene Sherman.

"Mr. Sherman started the accounting program at Troy State; he was the accounting program," Dr. Ratcliffe said. "I loved my time here; it really was the 'one student at a time' concept."

Because the accounting program at TROY was in its infancy in the early 1970s, the national accounting firms did not recruit in Troy.

"Mr. Sherman was a wonderful

teacher and the business faculty was filled with good teachers, but the accounting program had not been around long enough to develop a reputation with the national accounting firms," Dr. Ratcliffe said. "That's why I

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Denison wore many hats during his 37 years with the School of Music

By April Hawthorne

Looked at by many as an anchor of Troy University's music programs, Dr. William Denison has had the challenge of being the principal support for students and faculty of the John M. Long School of Music for the past 37 years.

This is not a challenge that he has taken lightly. Keeping the students at

the School of Music firmly grounded in their studies and the faculty steadfastly focused on their goals is an accomplishment that Troy University is proud to have witnessed.

However, there will be a noticeable void in the School of Music when Dr. Denison retired at the end of the Spring 2005 semester.

Having worn many hats in the

School of Music such as a professor of music, assistant chairman of the music department, director of the collegiate singers, interim dean and director of the School of Music, Denison has had a variety of tasks to keep him busy for the past 37 years.

Described as a "wise man" by a former student, "the very best

Continued on next page

Troy University bids farewell to three retiring professors

administrator we could have asked for” by a faculty member and “one of the smartest people I had ever seen” by the man who hired him, Denison has used his nearly four decades at Troy University to make a positive impact on countless lives.

One life he has greatly impacted, likely a person that Denison least expected to effect, is Dr. John M. Long, who hired him in 1967.

“I hired him because I was so impressed with his credentials, but now he has become one of my best friends,” said Long.

Long adds that over the years he and Denison have worked on almost everything together. “He advised me and I advised him,” Long said.

Denison agrees, “Dr. Long and I formed a compliment together. There were things that he could do well that I could not and vice versa.”

Through working so closely together, this friendship that developed was noticed and admired by others.

“In my thesis about Dr. Long’s life and career, I found that one fascinating aspect of both is his friendship with Dr. Denison,” said John Hillsman, a former student currently serving as the band director at Washington County High School in Sandersville, GA.

“I remarked in my thesis that Dr. Denison’s reserved and more cau-

tious demeanor often tempered Dr. Long’s more aggressive personality,” said Hillsman. “In many ways their professional lives served to compliment each other.”

Denison and Long’s fellow faculty member agree with Hillsman.

“Dr. Denison and Dr. Long have a mutual respect for each other that has made them great friends and colleagues,” said Carol Franks, coordinator and assistant professor at the School of Music. “They both admire the contributions each other has made to the School of Music.”

Though different in many ways, the men found a common thread on which to build.

“We hope that the school gets better and better each year,” said Long. “This has always been the case in years past and thanks to Dr. Denison’s standards, I know that it will continue to grow.”

Those expectations have driven the School of Music faculty members to perform in concert.

“He never lets us slip into mediocrity because he has set such high standards for us to

meet,” said Franks. “He’s so supportive and encouraging.”

His students have also felt his encouragement, and have often looked to him as an example of how teachers and students should interact. Hillsman said that because of Denison’s influence on his life and career, he has become a better teacher himself.

“Because of the patience that I have observed in Dr. Denison, and tried to incorporate in my teaching philosophy, I have been fortunate in my career to see many students mature into fine young ladies and gentlemen and musicians that I might have otherwise left by the wayside.”

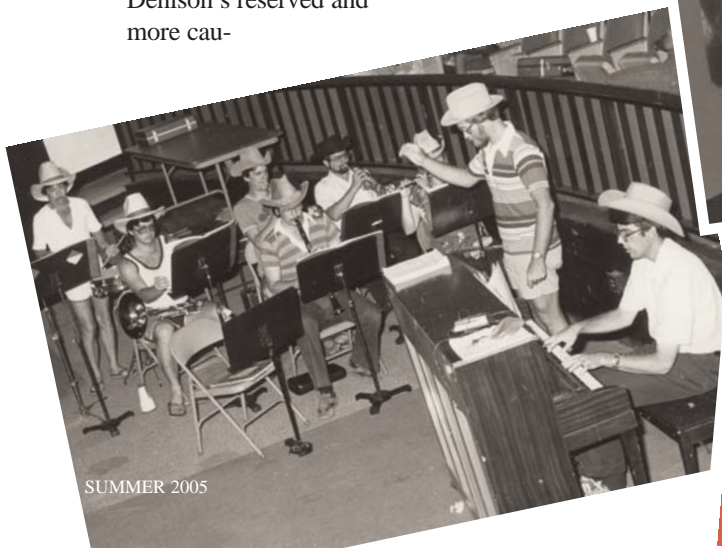
Being able to daily impact students the way that he has Hillsman, is something that Denison will miss in his retirement, but at the same time there are many things he is looking forward to.

“My wife and I plan to travel to our get-away house in Florida more often now,” said Denison.

“We’ll let him go away,” Long said. “Just not too far and not for too long!”

Hawthorne, a junior from Kinston, AL, is majoring in print journalism and public relations and is a workshop student in the Office of University Relations.

Pictured at left and below is Dr. William Denison, who recently retired.



Shillabeer leaves his brushstrokes on Department of Art and Design

It did not take Sergei Shillabeer long after becoming a part of the Troy University faculty to realize that teaching can actually be a learning experience.

Shillabeer, a native of Binghamton, NY, has served as a lecturer and studio professor at TROY since 1976.

“Ralph Adams hired me upon the recommendation of Woody Ishmael to serve as an instructor in the Art Department in 1976,” Shillabeer recalls. “Woody had terminated his service as the U.S. Air Force artist and was retained by Dr. Adams to paint portraits of dignitaries visiting the university. I shall long remember the creative energy of the staff and faculty during my formative years of teaching.”

Shillabeer received his early art training in Chicago and during the late 1950s in Los Angeles. He graduated from the Instituto Allende, San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, with a Master’s of Fine Arts in sculpture and painting. He admits, however, that he learned much from his own students.

“The 1970s and early 1980s generated a multitude of issues for reflection upon in the visual arts and many students were involved in conceptual and experimental art. I quickly discovered that I learned as much from them as I did from outside influences,” he says. “I came to understand the importance of sharing discoveries, a concept that I benefited from throughout my teaching and professional career.”

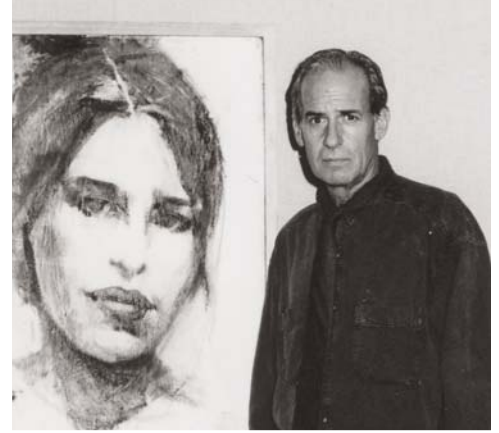
Shillabeer’s paintings have been exhibited in the Netherlands, Mexico, and Japan, as well as in conjunction with the United Nations and the National Academy of Arts and Sciences in Washington, D.C. He credits much of this

noterity to his time at TROY.

“The University played an important role in my gaining national recognition as a painter,” he says. “When Dr. Jack Hawkins took the leadership role, his devotion to the humanities was unparalleled. His administration endeavored to promote the visual arts, and I continued to grow with the University’s support. I will forever be grateful for the studio in which I worked; the opportunities advanced me through the promotional tools of the university, and the sincere and loyal influence of the administration I served under and the staff and faculty I served with.”

Jerry Johnson, chair of the Department of Art and Design, said Shillabeer will be missed.

“Troy University has had a long tradition of having some incredibly fine painters on staff in its art department. Dating back to the era of Woody Ishmael, fine portraiture and representational painting has been synonymous with TROY,” Johnson said. “Sergei Shillabeer has continued that tradition of excellence in this genre of art. I have often felt that his painting was like breathing – so very natural and seemingly effortless. Sergei will be missed by so many. I’ve been around the country many places, and I always seem to run into someone that asks about Sergei Shillabeer.”



Ratcliffe

decided to go to graduate school.”

In graduate school, the 21-year-old Ratcliffe was put in front of a classroom for the first time. Tom Ratcliffe had found his calling.

After earning his doctorate, Dr. Ratcliffe moved to Texas for 10 years where he furthered his career by working in both higher education and public accounting and, more important, he met his wife, Carol. He returned to TROY in 1986 at the urging of President Ralph Adams, but also to be near his family, as his father was experiencing health problems.

Since then, Dr. Ratcliffe has brought his “take it and make it real” approach to teaching to the TROY classroom. His students have consistently scored well on the CPA exam. He has put TROY on par with the “blue-and-orange school” and the “red-and-white school” as he refers to AU and UA. And major accounting firms, which once did not come to TROY to recruit students, visit campus on a regular basis.

Moreover, he has instilled in his students a sense of commitment to the profession of accounting.

“I always tell young people not to pursue any career, including accounting, for the money,” he said. “Be the

absolutely best you can at something you like. I am afraid some people choose the profession simply for the money.”

Davis is the director of University Relations.

Dr. Thomas Ratcliffe

- A member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants prestigious Group of 100, the AICPA Council and the AICPA Accounting and Review Services Committee.



- A prolific author on public accounting issues, he has published more than 100 technical works in accounting and auditing, including Matthew Bender's Applying GAAP and GAAS, a widely-used, two-volume accounting and auditing guide for practitioners.

- Past president of the Alabama Society of Certified Public Accountants.

- Seven-time winner of the ASCPA Outstanding Professional Educator award as the outstanding CPE instructor; in 1996, the award was named in his honor.