In Memoriam - Bob Southard

MARCH 25, 2009

Bob Southard was never not thinking about something and he willingly shared his thoughts with whoever chanced upon him. I was running back from a jog back campus when I came upon Bob stretching out on the cinder track. He stretched out in the manner of a person who is only just taking up running or perhaps even exercise. (He told me once that he was a 'baby runner' and I suggested to stop drinking so much soda.) I was in his Russian History class and working as hard as I could just to keep up with the reading. I sat down next to him and started my cool down stretch. He said, and I will not forget this as there was no salutation or prelude, "Paul, I have always found it interesting the way Quakers use the word 'concern' with so many shades of meaning." Such was Bob's way of welcoming you into his world of wonderings and non-sequiturs.

Bob was a gifted lecturer. When he wanted to drive home a point, he had a way of looking over his glasses and nearly yelling "Look...." When Bob said 'Look", that was time to slip into hyper drive and write as quickly as you possibly could because he was about to deliver the mother load of rich, textured, fascinating historiography on Alexander Isth or podzoil or artillery.

Bob was lovingly reluctant to abide by time. How often did his students sat in class until 12:25 when the bell rang thirty-five minutes before? I do not remember once anyone getting up to at the bell. Such was the respect he never asked for and always got from his students. He was not the authoritarian he sometimes joked about being. Bob was instead a gifted and honorable teacher who loved sharing ideas...their beauty and their power...with students who aspired to learn from him. We are grateful. Be good, Bob.

Paul Perkinson '79

FEBRUARY 26, 2009

From Mary Hyde Hood, 1980

News of Evan Farber’s death brought me to Earlham’s In Memoriam pages and I want to add my thoughts about Bob, albeit belatedly. A Classics/English double major, I signed up to take History 31 and History 32 with Bob as a sophomore in the fall of 1977 & winter of 1978. My boyfriend Stan Smith (1977) exclaimed you're taking two classes with Southard? Are you crazy? You’ll never get an A from him! It was just the prescription for success I needed. I’d show Stan! Bob covered my first paper (yes, 32 years later I still have them all) with nearly indecipherable red commentary, including seven places where he circled my flagrant use of the passive voice. Bob's last comment at the end of two-thirds of a page of feedback was finally; avoid the passive voice like the plague. I got a B+ on that one. My next paper rendered me shell-shocked as it earned a D. Bob worked with me patiently all trimester, allowed me to rewrite, and always encouraged
me. Somehow I ended up with an A in the course.

Interestingly, although I was an English major at Earlham, the toughest two graders I’ve ever had were Bob in these two courses and Steve Heiny, my Classics professor. Both men marked split infinitives, a point of grammar I’d managed to ace four years of advanced English HS classes without learning. Bob made copious marginal notes demonstrating his command of the language, such as when possible, don’t end sentences with adverbs and don’t lead with a participle form of any auxiliary verb. Deciphering Bob’s scrawled bravos in the margin of a midterm next to my authoritative account of the significance of the 12th and 13th century cog (aided by my background as a sailor) was one of the highlights of my Earlham career.

Bob was tough and honest and I wish more professors today would grade as carefully and critically as he did. Bob was also kind, supportive, and willing to invest the time it took to bring out your best. My older son is currently a sophomore at Earlham and I had hoped that he could take a class with Bob. My deepest condolences to the family for a premature loss that Earlham will continue to feel profoundly for many years.

I hope you’re happy, Bob. I edited this comment until all uses of the passive voice were removed (except this one)! :)

APRIL 09, 2008

Bob Southard did more than anyone to inspire me to become a historian and teacher myself. I only recently learned of his death, and along with Peter Cline’s passing this leaves me with a heavy heart. Some years ago I was pleased to see that he had finally completed his book on Droysen. Two specific memories:

- The way he generated those immense, billowing clouds of smoke in class. Remembered fondly from a happy time, long before we knew about second-hand smoke.
- The modest, inclusive manner in which he challenged us to understand history and humanity. I knew then that he was a fine teacher, but the years have only deepened my appreciation.

His legacy lives on in his students, colleagues and friends.

Thomas Pyke Johnson ’78

APRIL 08, 2008

I remember Bob’s sense oh humor, oddly enough. TGIM, DIIF were his trademarks -- the Workaholic’s credo. And his sad assessment of human nature -- “When the good Lord created humankind, he left a low ceiling on intelligence and no bottom for stupidity.” -- or words to that effect. He was my advisor and mentor. Grieving is.

Francis Wiget ’90

I was a history major at Earlham focusing on Eastern Europe with a minor in Jewish Studies...so needless to say Bob was someone who was intensely a part of my life for my entire college career...and his words and teachings have never left me. His dry wit and calm demeanor put you at ease, but he never stopped challenging me either. He wasn’t one to believe in grade inflation, and I can still remember the joy in my heart when Bob gave me my first A because I knew I earned it.
One memory that brings a smile to my face was my soph. year I came down with mono. After class I approached Bob and told him that if I looked tired in class it wasn't because I was bored, but because I was sick. He then told me about how he had mono as a child and he and his father were walking through the campus of Columbia University. At one point his father said “Look son, it’s Albert Einstein.” Only Bob could segue from mono into a story about seeing Albert Einstein.

Bob, you were a Mentsch in every sense of the word and you will be missed.

Jon Spencer ‘99

APRIL 01, 2008

A proud moment in my Earlham life was when Bob Southard acknowledged my progression as a student during my senior year. His honesty and critical thought will be missed.

Brendhan Flynn ‘00

FEBRUARY 11, 2008

The first official words I heard spoken at Earlham were Bob Southard’s, his welcoming speech to the first-years in August 2005. He said that the point of a liberal arts education was to pose and feel responsible to discern the best answers to the question, “How shall we proceed?”

His address that day confirmed my hope that my daughter was in the best sort of college, about to tackle the most important sort of work, aided by the knowledge, wisdom and heart of deeply committed people such as Bob Southard.

Julie Sandblom
My daughter is in the Earlham class of ’09

FEBRUARY 10, 2008

IN MEMORIAM:

The first official words I heard spoken at Earlham were Bob Southard’s, his welcoming speech to the first-years in August 2005. He said that the point of a liberal arts education was to pose and feel responsible to discern the best answers to the question, “How shall we proceed?” His address that day confirmed my hope that my daughter was in the best sort of college, about to tackle the most important sort of work, aided by the knowledge, wisdom and heart of deeply committed people such as Bob Southard.

FEBRUARY 04, 2008

I only audited a course with Prof. Southard but I remember him well. He counseled me on some academic matters, I don’t remember what - probably which major to take. I probably should have majored in history but ended up in a different department. Prof. Southard had that rich, full grasp of a subject that great students of history have. I loved to listen to him lecture and found him to be warm and thoughtful in discussion in class or individually. I'm sorry to hear he has died. I will remember him. I pray for his peace and the peace of his family.
JANUARY 24, 2008

I am so saddened to read of Bob's passing. My husband passed on November 12th very suddenly and so I feel for Edna and her two sons. I was only with my husband for 13 years, but I had met Edna and her sons through the Synagogue and seen them all as a family and my heart goes out to them.

I had Bob for many classes. I was in the first graduating class to be a part of the Jewish Studies program that he helped create with Gordan. I devoured his courses on Judaism, Jewish History, the Holocaust, and others. I was in awe of his ability to rework the boundaries of Poland for 300 years! I was terrible at his map tests, they drove me crazy, but he knew those boundaries and rivers like the back of his hand no matter the year! I still have all the books I read for him on my shelves.

I remember his story of going to see the concentration camps. His telling of how at Aushvitz there are now houses that back up against it, and that people have grown gardens. He boomed in class one evening... “Do they know what is fertilizing their gardens!?”

I will miss Bob. He was one of the professors that made my experience at Earlham great. All the best to Edna and her family, in the wonderful farm house that was half in Indiana and half in Ohio!

Jocelyn Lambert ’94

JANUARY 23, 2008

I have found as I age that there is so much to give thanks for. As time has elapsed and I continue to reflect on my Earlham education, I am so thankful for so many reasons. One of the greatest gifts I had was the opportunity to take multiple classes from Bob and to have him as my advisor. From my very first paper in one of his classes (which proudly earned me an F) to my graduation, he was the professor most responsible for turning me into a proficient writer. I was deeply saddened to hear of his passing and remain thankful for my limited opportunities to work with him.

Andy Strickler ’93

JANUARY 21, 2008

Many times in the last months I’ve wanted to ask Bob’s advice and have felt cheated that his wisdom has been taken from me, and I have felt sympathy with his family who have lost that wisdom and the enormous love he had for them. I hope many of us still carry the wisdom we learned from Bob and the affection he gave us.

I want to tell my version of the “Sunshine Bob” story. I believe I was present at the inauguration of this nickname, at a Humanities meeting in 1994, in Gordon Thompson’s living room. It was my first term teaching at Earlham and every man over 40 seemed uniformly out-of-date to me. Apparently, at the meeting the week before Bob had gone on for some time about the horrors of the book we were currently teaching, Dead Certainties by Simon Schama, and how it was not really a History.

In my fog of figuring out the Humanities program, his critique had
barely registered, but his apology for that critique has stood out from all the many Humanities Friday afternoons I experienced. I remember where Bob was sitting, and his self-effacing posture, and his beginning the apology with a halcyon picture of days to come: In the distant future, he suggested, new faculty would ask, “who’s that man who just sits in the corner and smiles and nods?” and the senior faculty member would reply:

“Oh, that’s Sunshine Bob. He’s always agreeable. He likes everything.” Bob, not yet in his “sunshine period,” he regretfully let us know, went on to apologize for being so cantankerous the week before in disparaging a book chosen with care by his colleagues. That was my first experience laughing so deeply with my Humanities colleagues and certainly my first experience of a colleague apologizing to a large group. Suddenly Bob stood out for me as hilarious and as a person with respect for others, self-awareness, and the integrity to act on what he thought was right.

That was not the last time Bob’s words made a powerful impression on me or taught me something I needed to know. Whenever I hear the term “Sunshine Bob,” I think of that meeting and of the deep colleagueship Bob created through shared laughter, shared forgiveness, and his description of the shared Humanities project of teaching Earlham students the highest standards of reading and writing. Along with rigorous standards and incisive critique, Bob brought the sunshine of collegiality, wit and love of learning to Earlham. Thanks Bob.

Kari Kalve

**JANUARY 17, 2008**

My condolences to the family, friends, colleagues and students of Bob Southard.

Bob was a grad. student instructor for a "froshmore" history course I took at the University of Chicago in 1970-71. Was he really only 25 then? I visited the Earlham website about two years ago when my daughter was shopping for a college, and I recognized him instantly -- though he wasn't brandishing a pipe in his mug shot! Oh well, I suppose all the classrooms are non-smoking these days.

From all the memorial posts, it's obvious he was a big and positive part of many lives. No doubt he has inspired many of you to become teachers yourselves. A teacher can't do any better than that!

John Chastain

One fall afternoon Sam Carter - even greater a fan of Bob Southard than myself, and his advisee - and I were wasting time before our classes began, loafing on the walk between the Heart and Tyler Hall, when we saw a stick on the ground in the shape of a ‘Y.’ By some inscrutable inspiration, we began spelling out a vulgar (yet spirited) exclamation on the concrete in sticks. We talked as we fashioned our letters, finishing our handiwork a minute before Bob ambled up in his peerless fashion and joined in our conversation. The three of us talked for several minutes more, and when it was time to be off for class, Bob glanced to our feet and said aloud, casually and confidently: “F--- yeah.” We shrugged, he smiled, and we parted. Sam and I both remember that moment fondly, and expanded to its broadest metaphorical capacity, I find it's worth considering often. Bob is, and will be, greatly missed.

Nathan Salsburg ’00
I'm very saddened to hear of Earlham's loss of Bob Southard. No one fostered my love of the obscure, fascinating aspects of history and storytelling more than Bob. His ability to pronounce the unpronounceable -- without hesitation or notes -- at 8 o'clock in the morning would make my entire day. Bob was also a kind, patient man who cared deeply about his students.

Sam Carter '00

JANUARY 14, 2008

It is with great sadness that I learned of Bob Southard's passing. I will remember him as a great, compassionate professor who always brought out the best in his students. He was influential in my own educational maturity, both in critical thinking and writing. I have no doubt that Bob had a significant impact on a great many of his students at Earlham.

Jonathan Stolley '84

I will always appreciate how Bob treated a young junior colleague like me with respect. Even when he thought I was wrong, he'd listen before arguing back. He was committed to supporting the work of younger faculty, and would show his interest in what I was doing with questions that called upon his vast knowledge of all areas of history and culture. I was stunned to hear about his sudden loss, and I will always remember him as a great model of an intellectual, scholar and teacher.

John Staines

DECEMBER 18, 2007

I remember Bob very well from my Freshman Humanities I class in 1992. Bob was kind and patient with those of us testing the limits of font size and spacing. His good feedback continues to stick with me today as I apply my writing skills to my work as an environmental educator, grant writer and public speaker.

In respect, admiration, and sadness,
Abby Fenton '96

DECEMBER 12, 2007

For the first few days after Bob's death I couldn't stop seeing him everywhere. One expects to see Bob everywhere, be it the Wellness Center, the Coffeeshop, in class, at faculty meetings, or simply strolling across campus to attend yet another committee meeting upon which he would bestow another one of his interminable nuggets composed of wisdom and heart.

Bob was a kind of combination ballast and rudder for the day to day Earlham. That deep voice, meticulous choice of words and the power to listen well made him the ultimate dedicated diplomat and assured us that we were staying on course, and if not, he didn't hesitate to suggest that we rethink our direction. I miss you Bob, and the lessons you leave behind will continue to guide us. Thank you!!

Shalom
Howard Lamson
DECEMBER 11, 2007

As it these testimonials make so clear, Bob had a profound influence on so many, especially his students who became teachers and I am proud to count myself among them.

I took several history classes from Bob (Ancient Rome and Greece as an independent study, Modern Germany, and Russia.) He, along with Peter Cline, had me hooked as a History major by the first semester of my sophomore year. I am still hooked, now teaching at the university level. I feel so fortunate to have attended Bob's "class" on the outbreak of WW I at homecoming last year.

As with Alan Braun and many others here, my teaching and love of learning was profoundly influenced by Bob. My students often groan about my comments on their papers. They have Bob to thank as much as myself. What an inspiration he was to so many of us!

Steve Tamari, '81

DECEMBER 04, 2007

Few academic experiences have changed my life as decisively as Bob Southard's Humanities I section in Fall 1987. I'm now in my tenth year as an English professor, so I've had a lot of academic experiences. The difference with Bob was that his uncompromising demand for intellectual rigor did not in any way compromise his human warmth. In fact, both qualities seemed to emanate from him in one gesture of kindness, as many of these contributions have recalled. I want to emphasize the rigor here, because I think in its pure form it is just as rare as deeply felt kindness is among professional scholars.

Bob made short work of proving to me how unpersuasive my arguments were in the first few humanities papers - because of the glaring ignorance they betrayed on some point of history, etymology or logic. His critiques made me want to write better and reason better: the tone of these critiques - I wish I could describe it, or achieve it myself - somehow gave me the sense that the point of all his erudition was to foster intellectual responsibility in others. Here was someone who really knew what he was talking about, but what mattered most to him was that his students should know what they were talking about.

I went on to take medieval history from Bob, in which he routinely assigned 200 pages of reading per night (for a class that met four times a week). The sublime reward was a final three weeks on Dante's Divine Comedy. The literary sensibility that Bob revealed at the end of this course, and his advice to me, helped to confirm my own path in literary scholarship, which is where I ended up - although I do still remember a few things about the Donation of Constantine. I could write so much more - about how kind Bob was when my father died during finals week at the end of freshman year; about how much vital service I have gotten from Bob's insistence that I argue a thesis properly; about the Bob Southard legends that circulated in my time and probably still circulate today. But I'll just close by saying that no one I have met has surpassed the standard set in my experience by Bob's gentle seriousness, his selfless pursuit of scholarly rigor in the interest of human growth.

Noah Heringman '91

DECEMBER 03, 2007
I remember Bob as a friend and a mentor as he helped me to believe in myself. I always enjoyed talking to him as a friend and a person who advised me in History. He was always there when I needed to talk to him. He sparked my interest in Jewish History and thanks to his encouragement I graduated Earlham with a degree in history. He will be missed. Thank you, Bob, for everything that you have done for me.

Joshua G. Cullinan ‘01

NOVEMBER 29, 2007

Bob loved the intellectual life. He was a walking inspiration to students and colleagues because he never doubted that what we do at a liberal arts college is important. It is important to read carefully, to check sources, to consider carefully possible objections to one’s views, to understand what others are saying, and to weigh one’s words carefully when speaking. It is important to lead an examined life, whatever one’s vocation or way of making a living may turn out to be. He modeled a grounded faith that searching together for truth is one of the most important things humans do, and never an easy thing to do.

Sometimes I have encountered Earlham graduates quite by accident in some distant corner of the world far from Indiana who when they remember Earlham, remember Bob. What they remember about him is that he loved to study. He believed that studying was important. He inspired a similar love and a similar belief in those around him.

Then by their own experience they came to realize that they had not only been inspired by a great professor, but had been introduced through him to a valid approach to life. They found in him a professor who made them glad they had chosen a liberal education. Memories of Bob helped them to follow a liberal education with a liberal life. I found that he was a colleague who was willing to move from his initial position to a different one. A dialogue with Bob was not a matter of listening to Bob defend his position. He was well-informed and well-read and always had good reasons for his positions. But more than that he was well-intentioned. When he found good reasons for changing his mind, he changed his mind. Listening to reason was integral to his very being. Those who came in contact with him learned from his example. We drew courage from his example. In this world where tendencies to live for small objectives are so strong, he demonstrated the value of living for the greater objectives of Earlham and of higher education.

Howard Richards

NOVEMBER 28, 2007

Bob was one of my mentors in college. I took several classes with him, including such low-key classics as a Jewish Texts class in Talmud, and another where we read memoirs. One of my most vivid memories was on September 11, 2001, in Bob’s Holocaust class. Bob was sensitive to the trauma of the day, and I believe all of the students were steadied by his thoughtful and empathetic response.

Several months ago, right before Bob left for Chicago, I was lucky enough to receive an e-mail from him out of the blue. He was just checking in to see what I was up to. He had been thinking of some of our shared class experience as he prepared for his upcoming seminar.

I look back at the e-mail I sent to him in reply, and I am relieved to find that I expressed to him, in what would turn out to be our last contact, how much I appreciated what I had learned from him in college. I know that he knew how much of a role he played in my
education and development as a thinker and a citizen and a person.

In that e-mail, I also suggested that we meet in Chicago some time this semester for coffee just to catch up. The semester heated up and I got busy and forgot about the proposal. On the weekend before I received the sad news of his passing, I thought of him, and regretted that the semester was running out and that there seemed no good time to make the proposed visit.

I am filled with great sorrow at Bob's passing, and regret not having had the opportunity to visit in person one last time. So much of the life I am building now can be attributed to not just what I learned from him, but how he taught me to learn and to engage the world around me. Earlham, indeed the whole world, has lost a tremendous resource, and I will mourn his passing.

My condolences to his family, friends and colleagues as they weather these difficult times.

Dylan Buffum ’02

NOVEMBER 27, 2007

I have been postponing writing my memories of Bob as part of my grieving for him. Reading others' words has inspired me, though, to add my thoughts. I want first to send my condolences to Bob's family: Edna, whom I admire so much, and his two sons. Bob had a special smile on his face when he spoke of you.

What I remember most is Bob's authenticity. He encouraged me so often, especially during difficult periods of my life. He called us - the Earlham faculty - to be our best selves and to commit ourselves to our shared vision of this particular sort of education. He never condescended in his conversations (although I admit I often had to reach for my dictionary after talking with him. He knew more words than anyone I have ever known!) He was not a self-promoter. He would be, I think, embarrassed to hear me say that for me, he embodied the words of the prophet Micah: he did justice, he loved kindness, and he walked humbly. I miss him so much. mg

Mary Garman

NOVEMBER 26, 2007

Bob was my first advisor when I attended Earlham. He was always willing to meet with me and help me when making decisions at the beginning of my Earlham career. He will truely be missed and my thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Angela Miranda ’01

I am struck by how many people received, as I did, a subtle but meaningful gesture of confidence from Bob at an important time. Bob's kind words on my Europe in the World Wars final made a tremendous amount of hard work instantly worthwhile, and I felt that he wanted me to pause, however briefly, and think about what that work accomplished. Bob's classes were an integral part of an invaluable Earlham experience, and I'm grateful to have known him.

Andrew Fiske ’91
As a history major, I took many classes with Bob Southard. In fact, I was a history major in large part because of Bob Southard. He walked into the room, started talking, looked at us over his classes as they slid down his face, and then opened his folder of notes. As he talked, I wrote furiously, trying not to miss a single insight, quotation, or carefully chosen fact. As I listened harder, I learned to appreciate the wry humor that laced his lectures. The vitality, rigor, and expansiveness of his lectures grew on me, and I found myself taking courses in topics I didn’t know I cared about, just for the privilege of understanding how Bob Southard’s historical mind worked.

My senior year I was sitting next to Bob around the seminar table when he began to lecture, but as he opened his folder of notes, he (and I) were surprised to see that the folder was empty. With barely a hitch in his sentence, he continued in the same erudite fashion. The lecture was lively, thought provoking, and punctuated with quotations, statistics and jokes.

Over the years I have listened to hundreds of historians and thousands of lectures, but none better than Bob Southard.

Tim Lehman ‘78

I took a course from Bob during his first semester at Earlham. He was very modest, yet obviously academically top-notch. I recall that he invited several us who met for an informal evening discussion class to walk to his home for informal conversation -- where we met Edna.

I recollect thinking that Bob had attended much larger schools, Columbia Univ. and the Univ. of Chicago, but he seemed to be a perfect match for Earlham. He was kind -- and clearly much interested in his students.

I remember Bob as being HIGHLY verbal, yet almost quiet. What a fabulous match for those then-future administrative and faculty committee roles where a most careful listener was as required as was a brilliant, learned professor!

While I’m happy that Bob remained at Earlham from 1971 until this autumn, I’m struck that he left us too young. I send my very best wishes and sympathy to Edna and to their sons who were born after I moved away.

Deborah Cunningham ‘73

NOVEMBER 21, 2007

I am thunderstruck. Bob Southard always seemed bigger than life to me. His demanding work ethic, imposing manner and teaching qualities that challenged me at every turn made me want a t-shirt at the end of each trimester that proclaimed I had MADE IT through a Southard class. He got me to ask questions - and not just “where are his notes?”, “how does he know all this stuff?” and “is he actually in his office or is that just a really big pile of papers?” I mean the deeper questions that really did keep me up at night.

Being a student of Bob Southard was truly one of my favorite experiences at Earlham. He demanded more of me, and I delivered. And most importantly, he fostered a lifelong love of history in me which I have passed on to my kids. It’s hard to believe I almost didn’t go to our recent 30th Class Reunion just a few weeks ago. I would have missed another great discussion with Bob Southard and his wife Edna.
My deepest condolences to Bob's family.

Peter White ’77

NOVEMBER 20, 2007

Spring break of 2007, a friend and I traveled around Arizona making a stop at the Grand Canyon. As I approached one of the lookouts, I ran into Bob and his wife. What a wonderful conversation we had sharing our experiences of the week and offering suggestions of other sights around Arizona that should be explored. My friend took a picture of Bob and I that day and I look at it and fondly remember our chance encounter that warm spring day.

Jill

Bob Southard was my favorite professor and academic adviser while at Earlham. He was one of the few professors I felt truly captivated by while in class. His lectures were always interesting and informative, but laced with humor, and I would frequently find myself chuckling in class while listening to him speak. I was always startled by the faith he seemed to have in my capacity as a student. I think he felt that way about all of his students, and it is for this reason I wrote most of my best papers in his classes (although not always the most timely - thank you again, Bob.)

Bob was such a kind soul. I will never forget one spring evening I spent having dinner at his house with our Jews and Judaism in the Modern World class. One of the most recent and treasured memories I have of him is one afternoon I spent in his office last winter as his advisee discussing graduation and my senior paper. “I just hope I can get everything done.” “You will,” he said simply. That afternoon I got him talking about his own college and graduate school years and giving me some real life advice. I was about 20 minutes late to my next class but even then was extremely grateful to have spent that time talking to him.

I am deeply saddened by Bob’s passing but have enjoyed reading these reflections of him of the past 30+ years. I will continue to be inspired by him for at least that long.

Katie Burke ’07

Bob Southard was a great teacher and a remarkable person. When my adviser left on sabbatical, Bob graciously and with enthusiasm, took over his post and guided me to all the right classes that semester (two of which were his!) When my adviser returned, Bob did not rescind his guidance but continued to assist me in my academic career. He even wrote me a letter of recommendation that helped get me into graduate school.

Eager to see any of my old professors, last month when I returned to Earlham for my reunion, I bumped into Bob while roaming the halls of the new Landrum Bolling Center. What a twist of fate as we were both living in Chicago and happened to return to Earlham on the same weekend! Bob and I excitedly discussed my career, his research and his time in Chicago. He extended an invitation to me to visit him at the Newberry.

I never got a chance to visit Bob at the Newberry; his death was sudden, shocking, and saddening. I feel fortunate and grateful that I was able to see my former mentor one last time. My heart goes out to
NOVEMBER 19, 2007

It is with crushing remorse that I write these words about Bob Southard. He was my advisor from the first day I started at Earlham through my graduation in 1995. During those years Bob always took the time to give me more than my share of attention. He introduced and instilled in me valuable skills such as academic honesty, critical thinking and creative inquiry. And although I arrived at Earlham from day one with a passion for history, it was he who equipped me with the intellectual tools and discipline to capitalize on that passion.

Looking back, I think that more than 40 percent of all my classes at Earlham were actually with Professor Southard. He repeatedly let me take independent study classes with him even though I was invariably overmatched during our one on one discussions. But Bob never made me feel bad when I stumbled, and he let me come to my own conclusions, which often happens when one is in the presence of someone so much smarter and wiser than oneself. For me, his subtle and creative wit often overshadowed a very complicated and impenetrable man. But at the same time he was one of the warmest human beings I’ve ever met.

Of course Bob was so much more to so many people than just a history professor, and he touched many more lives than mine. But his influence on my life was profound, and will remain so.

Joshua Kysiak ’95

While struggling with a paper for Enlightenment and Revolution class, I met with Bob for the first time in his office. Bookshelves towered all around us and as I looked at them he said, "Did you ever hear of the rabbi whose books fell on him and killed him? He went to heaven."

Barbara Sampson Segal ’84

There is much of Bob’s character and spirit that have become cornerstones of the Earlham experience. I recall his dedication to his students, his craft and his commitment to those things that make Earlham special as an institution.

Bob, I treasured the time I spent with you in the classroom and in your office as your advisee. You are “ein Mensch” and we will miss you.

Matt McWilliams ’94

Graduate School at the University of Chicago was a formidable adventure. I met Bob and Edna in those years. We all lived in Hyde Park and were trying to peer into the future. We looked at each other and wondered, but somehow Bob already epitomized what we were striving for: a huge intellect coupled with a warm and caring soul.

Thirty years down the road, his promise was fulfilled. I’ve read the memories of his students with tears in my eyes. Bob, the man and Bob, the teacher has touched us all. We’ve been robbed of another decade or two of his wisdom and wit. How fortunate to have had him in our
lives. Love to Edna who will miss him the most.

Ewa Bacon

Please give my best to his family. What a loss for Earlham College. Bob was my favorite professor while at Earlham. I majored in history while at Earlham in large part due to Bob. His classes had a deep impact on me and have shaped my outlook on society to this day. My best memories of Bob will be working as a tutor with him in the August Academic Program. He will be missed greatly.

Kyle Leathley ’00

As a member of the Alumni Council I had the opportunity to meet Bob and talk with him about the College. His dedication and insight showed me that he stood in the tradition of Earlham’s finest and most memorable faculty members. The tributes here all attest to that.

Rob Bresler ’59

May each of us remember Bob’s kindness, compassion and patience, and may we strive to be like him for all the days that we are here.

He is one of the reasons I decided to become a teacher, and on my most trying of days, I think about what he would do in my situation -- be patient, be calm, take off his glasses, wait with compassion and then speak with intention.

Katy Nameth ’97

My first class with Bob was Hum B. I ended up taking four classes altogether with Bob, because he was such a fantastic professor (I was a theatre arts major). I still bring up Stalin and Stalinism as my favorite class taken at Earlham, but I can never impart how incredible I found that class and Bob’s lectures to people outside of Earlham. More often people simply say, “You took what class?”

Bob’s profound knowledge of all topics from ones you would expect on European history to some obscure ten-year niche in some deep pocket of history still amazes me.

My favorite Bob memory is during a fairly botched class presentation given by a student in Hum B. I think it was about Syria and the formation of the (Phoenician?) alphabet. The student was practically reading verbatim out of a library book. At one point he glanced up from the book and interjected his reading to say, “Yeah, the Syrian alphabet is very dry and boring.” At this point Bob very gently but rather firmly took over the lecture. Bob just happened to know a little (as in a lot) about the alphabet. “Actually, the Phoenician alphabet is fascinating.”

Bob then gave an amazing speech completely on the fly about the formation of the alphabet, semantic languages, and linguistics, including examples of the writing on the blackboard. He was right, it was fascinating, because anything Bob lectured on he breathed life, humor, wit, and relevance into.

I give me deepest condolences to Bob’s family.
“The owl of Minerva flies at dusk. It’s a great line to say at a cocktail party.” – Bob

Marnie

Bob had what was, so far as I can tell, a truly unique ability to make the past come alive. I remember him discussing the creation of Israel with high school students at a Model UN meeting, and he successfully got them to understand that the past was an empowering set of contingencies written in the subjunctive mood. Yet even on issues as heated as Israel the only thing he would ever argue with you about was interpretation.

A few of us called him (perhaps a bit too irreverently) “The Sage of LBC.” But the fact remains he was someone who saw connections between epicontinental flooding in the plasticine epoch and the reunification of Germany. If someday I finish my Ph.D. and receive a faculty appointment, it will be toward Bob’s standard of rigor, candor, support and insight that I will strive -- knowing that I will never touch student’s lives as profoundly as he touched mine.

Scott Heerman ’07

To a wonderful teacher,

You helped me through humanities and increased my love of books and a good story.

Robert

He was one of my most memorable professors at Earlham. I took the Zionism and Jewish Statehood class from him my Junior year and found my self wanting to learn more and more even after the class was finished. In Hebrew school growing up I was never taught the full history and felt cheated. He taught it with an open mind. I am so grateful I got a chance to take one of his courses. All my prayers to his family. He was a wonderful good-hearted man. I will miss him very much.

Sarah Oberlander ’06

I didn’t exactly cover myself with glory in Bob’s European History class but he had a remarkable way of making distant times, places, and issues come alive for me. I treasure a particular memory from that course. Earlham had a fairly outdoorsy, back-packy aroma in the 1970s. It certainly suited me at the time. Bob had a subtle antidote for this over-compensating rejection of urban environments that reminded me cities could have high concentrations of art and learning. We were at Bob and Edna’s place one evening to have supper and discuss term papers. One couldn’t miss the stunning poster-sized photo on the wall of the Chicago skyline at night. The caption, paraphrasing a popular national parks slogan at the time, read “Visit Chicago: See the Great Indoors.” Bob always got you thinking.

Rob Bird ’74

I was fortunate to have Bob Southard as a Humanities IV prof, but I
remember him most fondly as a fellow student in Steve Heiny's Greek Language Class. As a jaded fourth-year college student, I was still naive enough to enjoy having a professor as a fellow classmate. When Bob tripped up over his Greek (as we all did!), it took some of the sting out of my own failings, going all the way back to my Humanities IV struggles. What Bob never knew was that he healed old hurts for me in that Hum. IV class (and I'm sad to say I can't even remember for sure what we were studying!)

In high school I was torn apart by green ink, corrections raggedly made by teachers who cared more for their own sense of right than actually teaching. When I would see green scrawled across a page of my work, all I'd see was how dumb I was. Bob used green ink on all my Humanities IV papers, and after my initial crisis in self-confidence, that gut-wrenching feeling of seeing green on my page! my writing grew stronger and his corrections became to me what they really were... guidance. Building up as a student and learner, not tearing down.

It's funny. I work at a pre-K-12 Quaker school now, although not as a teacher, and I just told someone this story (the green ink still has some power over me, it would seem), and so Bob was fresh in my mind when news of his death hit. My family is holding his family in the light. The gift of his life is that he gave so much. Those he built up will build others up and those gifts live on.

Lauren Keim '92

I have told the same story about Bob for years. How magnificently he could weave a gripping tale in a large lecture class; you could be sitting on the edge of your chair, wondering would the bell ring before he was done? Would he burn his finger before he lit his pipe? What did those notes, which he almost never looked at, even say? The climax of the lecture always came about 30 seconds before the bell, the fingers were never burned, the pipe always lit. It didn't much matter what the topic of the class, it was immediate, the details were alive and the questions entirely topical.

As an English major I have always been taken by the story of history and what we learn about human nature. Bob's history worked perfectly for me. I saw Bob just a few weeks ago at my 30th reunion. I was - and am filled with gratitude for the warmth, the humor and the immense soul of Bob Southard.

Alisa Deitz '77

Bob was my freshman advisor, and I never had reason to make a change for the next four years. His classes were perhaps the hardest I had at Earlham, but the almost casual way he urged us to adopt intellectual rigor in our studies convinced me that I was right to take as many of his courses as he would allow. The most important lesson I took away from all that European history was Bob's example of a restless, inquiring mind. He taught us to question, probe and think deeply - and by-the-way - write intelligently too! It is not at all surprising that he had a major impact on Earlham in a variety of capacities. I'm sure he will be sorely missed. My deepest sympathies to his family.

Doug McElrath '77

As I arrived home early this morning, groggy from work, I received the news that one of my mentors was dead. Though I deal with death and dying at work all the time, it was hard to fall asleep remembering how
wonderfully Bob had touched my life.

Though I took few classes with Bob, he was an ever-present personality in the humbly small history department. It was hard, as a history major, not to notice how brilliant Bob was. At history luncheons, he would ask simple but eye-opening questions. Of course, no one could forget the yearly gathering at his house, full of history geeks attempting normal conversation.

Bob was a wonderful, erudite man; his teachings and wry quotes will always be remembered.

When I first met Bob, I was the Napoleon-obsessed history and French major stoked on going to grad school an earning a PhD; I always wonder what he thought of me. But now, I always wonder what he thinks of me now...an EMT-Basic and soon-to-be paramedic, a career that has little to do with Medieval Europe. I can only hope that he would be proud of me, because goodness knows I am very proud of him; he was a great man.

Gav Eggert '06

Bob was an amazing person.

Sophomore year I remember signing up for his Russian history class. The first day it was me, a geology student, in the middle of a bunch of philosophy and history students. I felt very out of place. Then Bob entered the room, sat on the edge of the desk, took off his glasses and opened his mouth.

From his mouth poured forth a fount of knowledge and insight. I remember furiously trying to write down everything he said because it was so insightful and I wanted to be able to remember all of it. After a while all I could do was just sit with my pen still and just try to absorb the information that was pouring out of this amazing man. Every class was like that.

A few things I remember from that class: Stalin had a nickname, Comrade Index Card, in the communist party before he came to power. And how to say "Hello Comrade" in Russian (although I could not spell it properly.)

Thank you, Bob for being an amazing and inspiring person. You will be missed.

Rebekah Fitchett '02

NOVEMBER 16, 2007

I was so very sorry to learn about Bob's death, and I send my condolences to his family and to the Earlham community.

I was a history major, and Bob was my advisor. Even though it has been many years since I was an Earlham student, I still remember well the classes that I took with Bob -- the "Individual, State, and Society" courses and a course on Russian history. I remember being awed at how he gave a wonderfully organized and detailed lecture on World War I without any notes in sight.

Especially, though, I remember the class discussions, with Bob carefully guiding us and really listening to what we had to say. Bob led us to communicate more clearly, to think more deeply, and to develop important questions.

As I went on to earn a Ph.D. in history and started my own teaching
career, I came to appreciate even more than ever all that Bob taught us.

One of my recent memories is of a class that Bob taught for Homecoming 2006, and on that day, I was reminded once again of how lucky I was to have had him as a teacher.

Amy Slotten Schutt '80

In 1991, Earlham accepted me with the requirement that I attend the College's August Academic Term, a month long intensive writing program. I have to admit that I was not excited by the prospect of going to Earlham early, but I was blessed to have Bob Southard as my professor and advisor. I am deeply appreciative and grateful for the time, attention and coaching Bob gave me. He helped me understand that improved writing comes from practice, review and revision; that critiques of my writing were not personal but were meant to improve my skills; and that I had all the tools required to be a good writer.

I continue to work on being a better writer each time I lay my fingers on the keyboard and am grateful to Bob for putting me and other students on the path to survive the rigors of the humanities program, graduate from Earlham and succeed in our lives.

In appreciation and memory,

D. Kurt Terrell '95
Advancement Staff 1996-2002

It’s hard for me to think about what life was like before Earlham College had such a dramatic impact on my life. I recall being a young, immature high school student whose report card was spectacularly unimpressive. But I wanted to go to Earlham, and since my grades in high school were not at the level of most incoming students, the good people at the admissions office gave me one last opportunity to be admitted to the school.

While not very excited about it at the time, I was required to come to Earlham one day when I was finished with my high school class; listen to a short lecture from a professor, read a chapter from a book that professor supplied, and then - ultimately - write an essay on what I had learned. The results from this private one-on-one session would dictate whether or not I would be admitted to Earlham the following semester.

I was nervous as I arrived, and lacked any confidence that the results of this session would lead to my becoming an Earlham student.

But the professor was brilliant. He took his time with me, explained what I needed to do and what specifically he would be looking for in the essay. I found that, by the time we finished reading the excerpt from the book and it was time for me to start writing I wanted to do well, not just to obtain entry into the school I wanted to attend, but because I wanted this professor to believe in my ability to be a great Earlham College student.

Years later, I was told, the professor who spent his time to be with me that day — Bob Southard — took one look at my essay and told the people in the admissions office, “I don’t know what you’re worried about — this kid is going to be just fine.”

Bob was right.

By earning his approval that day I was allowed to spend the next four years — the most important years of my life — as a student at Earlham.
Thank you Bob Southard.

Without you Earlham never would have changed my life so dramatically for the better, I never would have met all the wonderful people — my fiancé Carmen and Mary Lacey especially — or cultivated all the hundreds of friendships I made during my time at that school.

I don’t know just how many thousands of students you influenced during your 30-plus years of teaching, but I’m sure there are too many to count. All I know is that the hour we spent together in that cramped admissions office in 1997 opened the door to the rest of my life.

Bob, you were right: This kid is going to be just fine.

Thank you.

Mike Kitchel ’01

I’m doing the math. I was born in ’64. Bob was born in ’45. So, thinking back to that spring of 1983 when I had just turned 19, Bob was a 38 year-old professor teaching Humanities III. I remember the room in Tyler Hall, sitting in a circle, Bob lecturing on early 20th century European history, W.W. I and the Maginot Line. Mostly, I remember what a beautiful spring it was, how distracted I was by the really cute guy with strawberry blonde hair who sat on the other side of the circle and how Bob worked so hard to keep us engaged. Every time he had a point to make he would take off his glasses and punch the air with them. But the air was so warm, the trees were so beautiful and that guy’s hair so lovely … it was all I could do to keep focused.

So, I came up with a plan. I started to keep count of every time Bob took off his glasses. One, two, three … six, seven, eight … Then, at some point, I started to take off my glasses when he took off his. Other folks started to catch on and soon there were a whole bunch of us doing the same thing. On, off, on, off. Not just one class, either. Week after week, people who didn’t even wear glasses started wearing them to class. On, off, on, off.

We were terrible. If Bob knew what we were doing, he never let on. That was 24 years ago. I am now older than when Bob taught me at Earlham. I’ve had a lot of time to think about that class and the terribly unfocused student I was. Since then, I’ve had a few opportunities of my own to stand before a bunch of woozy students. And on this cold, wet, almost snowy November day, I’m sitting with a pile of research articles, data print outs and sticky notes trying to finish my dissertation in public policy. The writing is hard, right now. Nothing is coming easily in this particular chapter. I’ve been wondering, lately, if this is my penance for being such a schnook of a student all those years ago.

That’s why it meant so much to me, today, to read Loren Lybarger’s ’86 wonderful note about how much he learned from Bob about writing. Reminding me that it does, indeed, take patience. It is often messy. It is worthwhile. Although I regret I wasn’t paying attention all those years ago, it’s remarkable that, through Loren, Bob is speaking to me today. I’m listening.

Thank you, Bob. Thank you, Loren.

Teague Morris ’86

I too was sad to hear of Bob Southard’s passing. Bob was one of my
favorite teachers. Though I was a biology major, Bob's lectures were so interesting and thought provoking that it really got me thinking critically about history. Bob was very personable, and encouraged me to consider switching to history as a major. I appreciated his interest in my education and the insights he shared through his lectures.

Ken Lee '75

Here is some vintage Bob. A year ago I asked him (along with others) to re-read the college's strategic plan, which he had a large hand in crafting, and to offer any thoughts on what progress we had and had not made.

Bob provided a very thoughtful, complex assessment and then added: “We have made enough progress that we should ask what we are doing right and lift that up to the light. Then, we should ponder why some things still, despite our efforts, go wrong. In confident worrying mode, we then should wonder if our difficulties may be derivatives of some unidentified problem that we should find and solve.”

Only Bob could have written those sentences. ‘Lift up to the light’ may show some of Earlham’s influence on Bob, but ‘confident worrying mode’ is part of what Bob gave us every day. He was intellectually confident and deeply, wisely learned. And for that reason (along with so many others) I loved conversations with him, even – or especially? - when we didn’t agree. His big smile, noting the goofy ironies of the world, would frequently grace those conversations. And the worrying came from his knowing deeply (and wanting you to know, too) that there were problems in the world (even at Earlham) that real people needed to look at in a clear-eyed manner and address.

He sent from here generations of students who are intellectually confident and who know that there are problems they need to address. And he was a teacher of these things to his colleagues.

Doug Bennett, Earlham President

Bob was my first advisor at Earlham, before I turned all focus towards Japan and working with Steve Nussbaum. I seem to remember Bob's office then as what one would expect to find in a story — the professor pondering under stacks and stacks of books. I loved his class discussions and spending my early college days with him.

Jason Whiton '87

Dear Bob's name came up just last week (not something that can be said about a lot of teachers one had 30 years ago). “How smart” everyone agreed. I reflected that he never put down those of us who were not as smart. He was kind to us, a true teacher, sincerely interested in our ideas, guiding us toward deeper analysis.

I remember him as a shy man who could disappear behind his pipe smoke (the old days) and his big glasses, letting his deep voice carry him into the discussion. He opened the vast vista of European history for me especially the concept of terrorism so on everyone's mind these days.

The sweet and loving relationship that he and Edna so obviously had together was also a source of education for me at that naive age of my life.

Julia Sefton '78
I am very sad to hear about Bob’s passing, but thrilled he was teaching to the end. If ever anyone had a gift for anything, Bob had a gift for teaching.

He was at once both incredibly gentle and incredibly rigorous. He appreciated creative, unorthodox thinking, but he didn’t like sloppy, careless work. He wouldn’t fault you for not being able to do better, but he wouldn’t let you off the hook if he thought you could do better.

Whenever I would get called into his office, I could always tell how much I was in for by watching his pipe. If he didn’t touch the pipe, it was a trifling matter, and I’d be out in a few minutes. If he simply lit the pipe, I’d be there a little bit longer. But if he actually scraped out the old tobacco, tamped in a new bowlful and lit it — I had some major revisions ahead of me!

I’m so grateful I had a chance to see Russian history through Bob’s eyes.

Alison Holm ’84

I was saddened to learn of Bob’s death. As a history major at Earlham I had the good fortune to take many classes with Bob. His courses were always rigorous but presented in such a way as to make it interesting and thought provoking for the student. His office door was always open to a student who needed help or who just wanted to talk.

The respect that Bob earned amongst his students can perhaps best be demonstrated by the full house of alumni he always attracted on reunion weekends when he would have a class or lecture.

Bob and Edna attended the Class of ’76 reunion dinner in 2006. I told him then that he was the best teacher I ever had, including my three years in law school. Bob will be missed by the Earlham community.

Tom Stovall ’76

I never had the privilege of attending one of Bob’s classes, but I do remember that every time I saw him he always had a smile on his face.

Susan Anderson ’98

Bob is and will remain one of the two teachers I think of when I try to express just how amazing Earlham teaching faculty is to friends and family. I always looked forward to the "BOB" days of the week when I would have his classes.

While lecturing it was sometimes hard to see where he was going with his topic but inevitably it would come full circle and provide a whole new way to view it, to concretely understand what it was we were discussing. I was constantly amazed at how he was able to broaden the limits of my understanding. He was truly an incredible teacher.

I have seen that others have posted memorable Bob quotes; I too have a collection. Some are educational in importance, others are criticisms I hope to remember but mostly they are humorous insights of a delightfully friendly man. My favorite happened just this semester in Chicago while we were talking politics and in reference to the worthiness of so-and-so, Bob said

“Now look, whatever you may think about pickles it’s a great way to use surplus cucumbers!”
Thank you Bob for being a friend and mentor.

Emma Sundberg '09

Bob was the model of a history professor — he set the standard for my husband, Dan Goffman '76, who also became a historian, always seeing Bob as the gold standard. Dan himself narrowly survived a stroke nearly two years ago and has not been able to return to his academic life; thus he feels especially saddened by Bob's death. Dan and I want Bob's family to know how long and deep the impression was that he made on us as Earlham students, as scholars and as practitioners of history.

Carolyn McCue Goffman '76

Bob was an amazing and inspiring teacher to me. May his memory be a blessing to everyone who knew him.

Jenna Greenberg '98

I never had Bob as an instructor, one of the things I most wished I had done at Earlham — but I knew Bob in the context of being an active member of the Jewish Community Center. Bob was a wonderful model and mentor for the development and maturing of my own Jewish identity, and I appreciate the privilege I had of getting to know Bob during my years at Earlham.

Ben Gorvine '94

Alas, I am no better now than I was when I took Bob's classes at remembering details, but the highlight of my class reunion last year was his lecture where he drew humorous parallels between a period in 19th century European history and the present U.S. administration. I am so glad I had one last chance to be awed by his breadth of knowledge and amused by his wry presentation. My deepest condolences to Edna and his family.

Day Lancaster '76

Without Bob Southard I would not have become an historian. At the close of my junior year, as I left his classroom, he turned to me and said, in his deep, kind voice, "Ian, if you are thinking about going to graduate school, I would be happy to write a letter for you." It was a generous thing to say to a loud-mouth know-it-all student, and it opened a door that would have otherwise remained closed. Only now, as a professor myself, do I understand what he was doing.

I knew Bob as a passionate scholar-teacher. He communicated a sense of wonder and humor about the past as well as a sense that it was available to us through tough research in primary documents. It was in his classes and those of Jackson Bailey and Chuck Yates that I began to consider what it might be like to sift through musty old archives in pursuit of fresh knowledge and new interpretation. He was a model for the importance of outside, ongoing research to the classroom and the college.

He was also a lot of fun. The last time I saw him, we were parting ways in Tokyo, of all places, at the close of an afternoon of noodles and patient detours down tiny Asakusa streets. I had hoped to see him...
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ian Miller '92</td>
<td>Again in Richmond. Now I will return to his writing to thank him and say farewell. With much respect and sorrow for Edna, David, and Jared. And for our whole extended community.</td>
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<td>Burke Josslin '00</td>
<td>My last correspondence with Bob was only a few weeks ago. He agreed to write me a letter of recommendation for law school, and I told him how useful I had found his courses in helping me understand the world. He was a great teacher and brilliant man under a humble cover. Earlham is said to be one of the &quot;colleges that will change your life.&quot; Bob, in his subtle wisdom, did that for me. He was a credit to his institution and his profession.</td>
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<td>Sue Parker '75</td>
<td>I was lucky enough to encounter Bob in my first Earlham course. He was only a little bit less new to Earlham than I was. I knew I wanted to be a history major, but the studying with him in the department's introductory course helped me to be certain it was most certainly the right path for me. As a history major I focused on the U.S., and I never had another class with Bob, to my regret. It has been satisfying to know he has challenged and inspired Earlham students for all of these years. Bob's sudden passing is a shock. What a great loss for us all.</td>
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<td>Janine Schwab '94</td>
<td>Bob was my college adviser and wonderful. One of my most oft-retold anecdotes from Bob's classes was the time he talked about how people always asked him, as a historian, if he could go back in time where would he go. His answer, &quot;Chicago... about right now!&quot; It is comforting to know he died in his favorite city. My heart goes out to his children who I met on a raucous van trip to the Holocaust Museum and to Edna who hosted one lovely history department gathering in the best Indiana farmhouse I know. One of my most enduring images of Bob is of the work he did as the local Richmond Hebrew teacher. His faith and his love of teaching were immense.</td>
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<td>Erin '93</td>
<td>Bob was the professor for my very first class at Earlham (Humanities I). I loved the fact that he never sugar coated any thing. He was the perfect introduction to the discussion process that I miss so much in my professional life. I have often thought it would be nice to have Bob instruct others, in my life, how to take part in a discussion with differing opinions, maintaining your passion without becoming hateful. We will all miss him, while being thankful that he shared his wonderful abilities with us.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I was an English major who kept taking History classes because of Bob.</td>
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I actually still have, among my papers, a compilation of memorable Bob quotes, including the immortal ‘If someone holds a gun to your head and says ‘eat the ham and cheese sandwich or die,’ you should eat the ham and cheese sandwich.’ He was a great professor with a great love of his subject, and I am so sad to learn that future Earlhamites will not have the chance to learn with him.

Amye Rosa ’99

Bob Southard, My Friend,

Over thirty years, you always gave me words of encouragement and pearls of wisdom to guide my Earlham path. You always found time to talk, send a note, place an encouraging voice mail or send the new form of communication, e-mail. You never betrayed my confidences and I thank you for your trustfulness, integrity and friendship.

Shortly after my retirement, Kris and I went to lunch with you and as you said it was “an encouragement and celebration lunch for Linda.” I will always remember your smile and the kindness shown towards Kris and me. Again, your wisdom is beyond measure and your best gift to me. I will miss you.

Safe journey my friend. I will see you soon,

Linda Wolski

I hear Bob’s voice and feel his presence in the corridors here at LBC. He was the friend with whom I could talk at length about the Soviet Union and a colleague who always thought the best of people and about how we could all work together in community. I think of him as a humble sage, a person who emanated wisdom without trying to do so. I miss him a lot.

Welling Hall, Faculty

Bob had just arrived at Earlham when I did as a student. He became my advisor and so was the start of an education. He woke me up and made me think. He taught me to write (I still have his comments on papers I wrote as a student and they are nearly as long as the paper.) He was a role model for me when I became a Professor. Not only in teaching style but also in reaching out to students (as when we had one class weekly at his house.) A person lives on in memory and a part of him is within me.

David Vlahov ’74

When my great-grandmother passed away I inherited letters that she had received from our family in Russia. We hadn’t been in touch with them for years. The letters were written in Yiddish. Bob took time to help translate the letters for me. I’m so grateful for the stories I learned about my family. I will always remember Bob’s kindness.

Courtney ’98

My fondest memories of Bob are of him explaining study skills. He was
a straight shooter. He also was understanding and easy to talk to. He was one of the first professors that I had interaction with at Earlham and he made a lasting impression. He will be missed.

Jason ‘98

I was a history major before I turned to philosophy and Bob was my adviser. I was interested in European history and so I took many courses and seminars with Bob. He was a fantastic adviser, who cared about courses I took, how I wrote, what my plans were, how I felt. He always asked the right questions. On my way from history to philosophy I was a double-major, and when I was considering dropping my history major, we had a meeting in the faculty lounge one evening in Lilly library. We talked and talked, and finally he said, "Look at it this way: would you enjoy being a teaching assistant in logic and grading logic tests?" That question solved all mysteries. The answer was "yes," I dropped the history major, and then and there decided I wanted to go to graduate school in philosophy. I felt bad at the time, that I had somehow betrayed him, and I think about that moment a lot. But I came to realize that for Bob, who was so deeply committed to the pursuit of truth and intellectual integrity, this was just another small contribution to that project. The news about Bob’s death makes me very sad. At least he died in the city I know he loved very much.

Michael Losonsky ’75

I took Humanities IV: Europe in the World Wars from Bob my junior year. At the time I was struggling with my academic self-confidence, and I will never forget the comment he wrote on an exam of mine: "This is a model essay." That simple comment did wonders to boost my confidence and help me through my final two years at Earlham, not least because I knew that Bob didn’t give out free compliments – he held his students to a high standard, and when he said you had done a good job, he meant it.

Thanks Bob, you did more to help me than you probably knew.

Brian Kirchner ’92

I was sorry to learn of the passing of Bob Southard and send condolences to his family. Simply put, Bob taught me to write. As a freshman Humanities II student, I learned that my inflated, SAT-prep, AP English style was mostly drivel. He ruthlessly edited me with his trademark green marker, lining out paragraphs as "deadwood" and admonishing me to "Avoid cliches like the plague." I am deeply indebted to Bob and have told the story of my time with him over and over, most recently to my high school daughter who is going through the same thing with her English teacher. He touched my life and I will always remember him for being a wonderful teacher and person. Warm regards to his family, Neil Levine.

Neil Levine ’83

Bob always had great advice. "Remember this, if you ever go to war..."

He taught me all the finer things of Russian history, and masterfully summarized the country’s entire past with a glorious comment: "Basically, the big mistake in Russia’s history was the decision made, a thousand years ago, to become agricultural."
It got to the point that listening to his lectures was like cracking open an old, familiar book.

Paul Christiansen ’06

I want to express my heartfelt sympathy for Bob's family after I learned of Bob's death. I was graduated from Earlham in 1982 and my major was history. Though I did not have many courses from him, I greatly respected him and found him one of the most important teachers and scholars at Earlham. He will be missed.

Charles Gurd ’82

In the spring of my sophomore year, 1978, by which time I had taken several courses with Bob Southard, he made a comment on an exam that helped start me on a path as a student and teacher of history. With his typical eloquence, he noted that I was good at history and that I should seriously consider it as a major. It was a brief and simple comment, but it came at the right time, with the right tone. After graduating with a History degree from Earlham, I became a history teacher. What Bob taught me, more than how to analyze the past and how to write, was the potential impact of what teachers say to students. I would guess that Bob never knew the impact of his comment, but I am reminded with regularity that my words as a teacher truly matter. Years after I taught them, my former students visit me and sometimes remind me of things I said to them once. While I don't recall saying these things, my words sound like me, and I smile, knowing that once Bob Southard made a comment that stuck with me and helped shape my future.

Alan Braun ’80

I will always remember Bob as both my professor and my college adviser. From the first time I went to his house for dinner, all the way through my independent study project, Bob was always kind and supportive. I grew so much in college, and Bob was a part of that growth, always providing counsel and advice. He also helped me to really understand more about myself by acting as my adviser for my independent study. My condolences go out to his wife, sons and family.

D.M. ’07

Bob was a gentle soul. He had a wealth of knowledge but spoke to you as if you were an equal. He inspired me to learn more about Eastern Europe and World War II and the Holocaust. He was truly a teacher in the sense that he always made me feel like I could learn anything. I even considered pursuing a PhD. in history for a short time all because I was so inspired by Bob. He always seemed to me to not only be a terribly knowledgeable man but also a deeply spiritual one. I am deeply saddened to know of his sudden passing and will miss him greatly. I feel for his family and extend my deepest condolences to them. I am also sad to think of what future classes of Earlham grad will miss as he added SO much to my Earlham experience. That said, I think Bob would want us after this initial mourning period to focus on celebrating his life and the best way to do that in my opinion would be to "pass it forward" so to speak. Treat others like Bob treated us, with respect and as equals, and continue to keep the history of the Holocaust alive so that the world does not forget and so it is not repeated.

Wendi Weimer Fowler ’94
Bob was one of my favorite lecturers at Earlham. His dry delivery, punctuated by beautiful and amusing analogies, kept my rapt attention and, to this day, I remember whole passages he said in class. I have adopted some of his turns of phrase. He also was a student along with us in Ancient Greek with Liffey and Steve. An amazing and friendly man. I am glad that I had a chance to be his student.

Constantine Singer '94

I don't know what to say. I only had Bob for two classes -- Jewish literature and Jews and Judaism in the modern world. The latter finished off my Jewish studies minor; I was late submitting it, and Bob helped me get things straightened out. I sort of thought of Bob as the history patriarch of Earlham. He asked a lot of work in his classes which made them difficult, but he was a brilliant professor, and anyone who put in the effort was well rewarded. He seemed a little awkward, and very kind. When I asked him why he converted to Judaism he smiled and said that studying and writing about Judaism for so long as an outsider, he'd been having trouble with his pronouns.

When I entered Earlham, they told stories during orientation about professors inviting students over to their houses -- I suppose it's part of the Earlham way. In truth Bob was just one of two professors to invite me over during my time at Earlham, the other one being Gordon Thompson. I know that it's a cliche, but Earlham suffers a tremendous loss with his passing. My heart goes out to his widow, to his students whom I personally knew who adored him, to his friends among the faculty and to the current history students at Earlham who will be deprived of his wisdom. I hope you are well.

God bless,
Jeremy Moses '06

I was a student in the history department during Bob’s first year of teaching at the college. It was he probably more than anyone else who persuaded me to get my doctorate in German history at the University of Chicago. He and Edna came to Chicago a time or two while I was a student there. Afterwards we more or less lost touch for many years and then by chance we exchanged some email last September. He was thinking of coming to Berlin (where I now live) in the spring and we planned to get together.

His untimely death is a sad loss for the community. He and I talked briefly some years ago about contributing to a Festschrift for our common Doktorvater, William McNeill. I think it would be a fitting memorial to Bob if there were a Festschrift in his honor.

Michael Seadle '72

I feel unspeakable sadness today. The news of Bob Southard's sudden death weighs so heavily.

Other than Peter Cline, perhaps no other teacher of mine at Earlham had as profound an influence on me intellectually as did Bob Southard. He had the reputation of being hard and demanding. He was certainly that. His reading lists could be overwhelming, Everest-like. He once assigned Telford Taylor's titanic tome on the Munich conference in a course on Europe during the world wars. Once, during that same course, none of us showed up having read the immense number of

http://www.earlham.edu/aroundtheheart/cat-inmemoriam--bobs.php
pages assigned for the day. When Bob figured this out, he lectured us on preparation and then promptly booted us out of class, telling us to go read.

Bob was also a tough grader. Every paper I wrote came back with multiple corrections at every level of detail, grammatical, rhetorical, conceptual. His handwriting was impenetrable, often, but if you could make it out you would find insights that helped you think more carefully. A question that persistently cropped up in my papers for him was, "So what?!" Why was what I had been venturing to say--once Bob had clarified it--worth saying? A great question, maybe the only one that really matters. I remain amazed at the time he took with those papers, many of them thrown together the night before. He must have felt as if he were casting pearls before swine. Many years later, as I finished my dissertation, I pulled out those papers from a dusty box and shook my head. How was it that I took so little care in crafting my thoughts. Yet, in paper after paper, Bob carefully commented and corrected on almost every line. I emailed Bob then to express my appreciation and contrition. He responded warmly and supportively. He must have long realized what I was only beginning to understand: that lives unfold over decades, often taking surprising, unforeseen turns.

Bob was also a brilliant lecturer. He would come into class without notes and hold forth for an hour or longer on whatever topic concerned us that day. I would take copious notes and, when reviewing for exams, would notice how well organized his thoughts were. How did he do that? His learning was immense and his ability to convey it admirable.

My most enduring memory of Bob, however, is of his humility. Spring semester of our senior year (1986) the history department held its annual picnic for majors. Bob and I fell into awkward conversation over hot dogs. He was set to begin a sabbatical and was telling me about his latest writing project. In the midst of our short conversation he reflected on how he was discovering once again how difficult it was to write. I have thought a lot about that comment ever since. He seemed, in a way, to be acknowledging that perhaps he had been too demanding, too impatient with the incoherent thoughts of students like me. Writing is hard. The first attempts at expression are often confused and inchoate. As he returned to his own writing he had rediscovered what it was like to navigate in the mist of the new and unfamiliar. He had become a student again and in so doing deepened his empathy for the individuals who came to his classes year in and year out.

Bob Southard was demanding, and in being so, challenged us all to strive beyond what we thought we could achieve. But, what I will always remember is his humility and great learning. He was a teacher in the very best sense, and I will miss him.

Loren Lybarger ‘86

Bob Southard was a wonderful person and a great academic. Had it not been for his support and guidance I might not have made it all the way to graduation.

My senior year I spent many hours learning and laughing with Bob in his old, small office in Tyler with the floor to ceiling book shelves. Every inch of that office, except for the small window, was lined with books. Every inch of that office, except for the small window, was lined with books. Every inch of that office, except for the small window, was lined with books.

It came down to crunch time my senior year, I had a few projects to finish for other professors and only about two weeks left until graduation. I went to my weekly independent study meeting with Bob. We were having a jovial time discussing my comps. My academic advisor, former Earlham professor Maria Chan Morgan, heard me laughing and came into the office. She informed Bob that I had projects to turn in to other pros and if I didn’t get them done - I might not be passed to graduate. Somehow in that instant — Maria and Bob
I didn't discover Bob Southard until my senior year at Earlham. I took one class, his European History, Spring 1987, and it was one of the very best I had at Earlham. Bob's teaching, especially his intellectual rigor and curiosity, and his exacting standards for student work have stayed with me for 20 years. I do not think about European history, or history in general, without thinking about Bob, and I frequently go back to the texts he covered that semester. His is a wonderful legacy of teaching and scholarship that will certainly live long in the memory and work of his students.

Catherine Kemp '87

I am saddened to hear of Professor Southard's untimely death. He was an extremely knowledgeable historian and a challenging teacher, one of the best I have ever had. For some reason I was always motivated to do well in his classes. In some part this was due to the subject matter, but I think it was also that he made challenging work seem achievable.

Prior to my time at Earlham there was no indication I would take the morphed into the fussy, overly concerned parents that I had never had. Bob jokingly said he had almost passed out from hearing Maria's news. Maria nodded gravely. Bob ordered me from his office and to go finish my other projects. The two of them double teaming me in that tiny office was the kick in the pants I needed to make the final push and finish my senior year successfully.

Amazingly I had found that after 3 and 1/2 years of wanting to get "out in the world" I was a little gun shy. I remember trudging into another independent study meeting with Bob earlier that year in the dead of winter. I was a bit out of sorts and Bob picked up on it. He asked me what was wrong. I replied, "Nothing a college degree won't fix." Bob replied, "Don't be so sure" and talked about the gift that college can be – the opportunity to really study a subject in depth.

I always admired Bob for his devotion to and the joy he derived from dwelling in the world of academia. I graduated from Earlham and went on to a career in the music business. Working as a music booking agent I had occasion to talk to current EC students who were wanting to bring bands to campus. I would always ask them, "Have you taken a class with Bob Southard yet? Don't miss out on taking a class with Bob."

I also had a corkboard up over one side of my desk. I had various things tacked up there - pictures, mini posters, stickers, tickets from very, very special shows, info I needed to do my job, etc. Toward the center of the board I had a picture of Jay-Z holding a songwriter's award that I had cut out of Billboard magazine and a picture of Bob, surrounded by books of course, that I had cut out of the Earlhamite magazine. As I would sit at my desk, on the phone hour after hour negotiating with talent buyers for dates and money, my gaze would drift over to the corkboard. I'd always smile when my eyes got to the Bob and Jay photo montage. For me they represented inspiration - two greats at the top of their respective games.

I was very privileged to be invited to spend Thanksgiving 1997 with Bob and his lovely family. My heart goes out to them at this time.

Finally, I must say that in true (old school) Earlham fashion I still owe Bob a paper on the Jugurthian War. The books, the notes, the rough drafts, etc. are still packed in the small box I sent them home to California in. I think it's time to crack open the box and finish the paper. I know that Bob's spirit will be up there, out there somewhere - still reading!

Annabelle Johnson '98
route I did, but Professor Southard was one of the people who made me think that I was capable of doctoral work. He shaped my life as much as any professor at Earlham. I have nothing but fond memories.

Michael McQuarrie ‘90

I didn’t know Bob well. I had only one class with him, an independent study on Christianity in classical culture. Once he mentioned something about the Nicene Creed; I had no idea what it was and asked about it. Bob smirked and grumbled about having to teach Sunday School. But, of course, he told me.

As the class went on, I began asking him questions about Judaism. What are the little sticks rabbis use to read from the scroll? And why do they use it? Why do some rabbis rock back and forth when they read or pray? Was Job a righteous man? Was God? In the end, I think I learned at least as much about Judaism, as I did about early Christian history.

And that says something about the kind of person Bob was, a teacher, through and through. As long as the student was learning and thinking, the subject matter was almost irrelevant. I’m presently working toward my master’s at the Earlham School of Religion. I wouldn’t be where I am today without Bob’s subtle influence. Like all good teachers, he changed my life.

Michael Patrick McCully ‘03

Bob’s "Individual, State and Society" class, which I took at the end of my freshman year at Earlham, hooked me on history for life and convinced me to choose that as my major. His encyclopedic knowledge, passion for the subject, and wry sense of humor made it a pleasure to attend his lectures.

My sophomore year I had the good fortune to be able to take Bob’s "Russian History" class, which ironically set the stage for me leaving Earlham. I was so fascinated by the panorama of Russian history and culture that he opened for us that I eventually opted to transfer to the University of Chicago, where I was able to take additional Russian history courses and study the Russian language.

Many years later I began a career with the State Department, and have had several postings to Russia and other countries that had been part of the Soviet Union.

Those academic and career paths all lead back to Bob, it is hard to imagine I could have ended up where I am without his influence and guidance while I was at Earlham. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity I had to study with him and to get to know him, and know he will be missed by the thousands of people he touched over the years.

Scott Rauland ‘80

Bob Southard was one of my favorite professors. His lectures were always a delight. He could pack more information into an hour than anyone else I’ve ever heard, without ever being overwhelming or dull. I’d walk out of class with a full brain, a cramped hand and a grin.

Kathleen Fuller ‘07
The news of Bob’s passing reaches me on a cold Chicago evening. I took Bob’s Modern Jewish History course after studying on Earlham’s Jerusalem Program. I remember how the course helped me begin to place the current politics I was studying in the larger context of Jewish history. The books Bob taught in the course are amongst the ones I still value and keep on my bookshelf today. His place in Earlham’s small Jewish Studies Program was deeply important to those of us studying Judaism and Jewish history. His commitment to his field and quiet presence on campus left its mark on many students. I feel very grateful for the time I knew Bob. My prayers and condolences to his family in this difficult time of loss.

Liv Leader ‘02

One time we were at a dinner where different people of different faiths lectured while we ate and discussed. Bob came and spoke almost directly to me the whole time. He made a joke about how the Jews think they’re the chosen people, but in reality they were the only ones who didn’t deny God. That cracked me up.

What a wonderful spirit he had.

Kaitlin Flynn ‘10

Bob, you had a demeanor unlike any professor I have ever had or known. You could lecture from a chair for an hour in the most unassuming of tones and the class would be rapt with attention the whole time. You were the epitome of a scholar and the gentlest of persons. You inspired so many of us to be history majors, and I cannot stop wishing I could take one more class with you. Much love and gratitude; you will not be forgotten.

Earlham Student

During my time as a student here I served on the Admissions and Financial Aid Advisory Committee with Bob. He brought great ideas and tremendous experience to the group. Bob’s insights were always met with enthusiasm and backed by years of experience in the academic world. He will be missed!

Maggie Shank ‘06, Faculty

Bob was my advisor and teacher of six courses. He was inspiring and challenging as a teacher. It was wonderful to come back to Earlham to be Bob’s colleague. I frequently had lunch with Bob in the Coffeeshop and could count on an interesting discussion. It was apparent to me upon my return that Bob was key to so many areas of academic life at the college.

I was shocked and saddened when I heard of his sudden and unexpected death. My condolences to Edna, David and Jared. All of us miss Bob already.

Jim McKey ‘78, Faculty