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6-24-2021

Professor Emeritus Began Teaching at Gardner-Webb in 1967 When First Baccalaureate Class Were Freshmen

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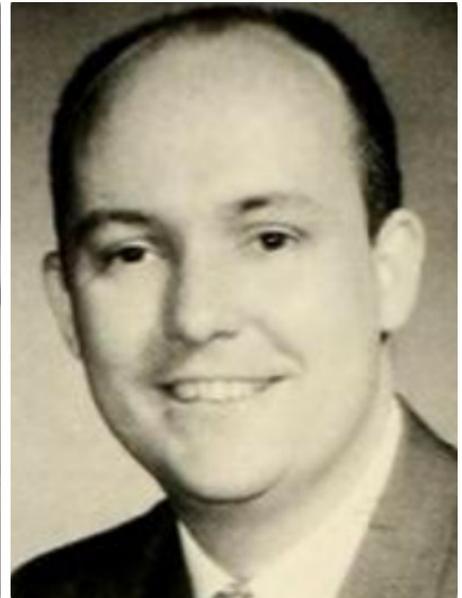
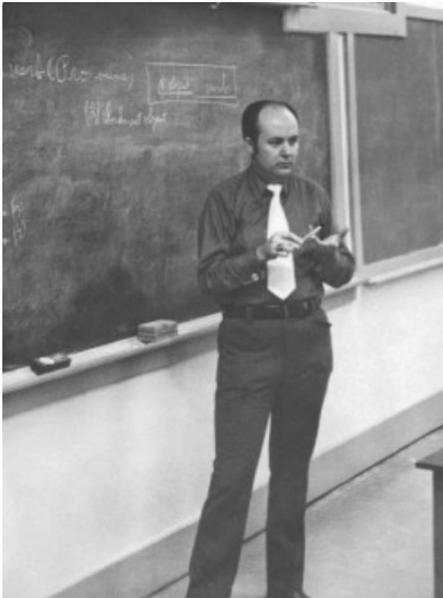
Manning, Kathryn, "Professor Emeritus Began Teaching at Gardner-Webb in 1967 When First Baccalaureate Class Were Freshmen" (2021). *Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive*. 2261.
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GWU HISTORY

Professor Emeritus Began Teaching at Gardner-Webb in 1967 When First Baccalaureate Class Were Freshmen

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON JUNE 24, 2021



Dr. Robert Morgan Also Taught Other Faculty Members Leading up to Accreditation

FINAL IN SERIES

WRITTEN BY: KATHRYN MANNING, '18, BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES AND SPANISH

Dr. Robert Morgan, professor emeritus of French and mathematics, first arrived at Gardner-Webb in 1967. Having previously taught at a high school, then Wingate Junior College, he shared that the shift to senior college at Gardner-Webb only made sense. “I was so happy!” he said quite emphatically. Laughing, he continued, “I was probably one of the most excited people about our becoming a senior college, because I had just come to Gardner-Webb when the ones who ultimately got a baccalaureate in ‘71 were freshman students, so that made a wonderful time to be there.”

After a couple of years of teaching at Gardner-Webb, Morgan was one of several faculty members who took advantage of the offer from Dr. Eugene Poston [then college president] to go to another school and earn his doctorate, while receiving a partial teaching salary.

Leading up to accreditation, he recalled assisting in creating upper-level French classes and helping with the French teacher licensure program. “As we became a senior college, I so much enjoyed teaching quite a number of faculty who already had their PhDs,” he reminisced. “I would teach them the French culture class, or some even took the intermediate grammar with me, and then I had some in the advanced grammar.”

He mused, “I even taught people like Dr. Joyce Brown [professor emerita of English] and Dr. Tom Jones [professor of biology]. I always just thought that was wonderful to have people studying with you who had their PhDs in different fields.”



In 1973, soon after the official transition, Morgan remembered taking students on international trips to Paris, France, and having students study in Canada. He estimated that Gardner-Webb had more student foreign travel than the majority of other small senior colleges at that time. He shared that these experiences translated into the classes he taught, such as the French culture class, which was one of the new upper-level classes. He said, “I always liked to keep my courses up-to-date and alive, and every time I’d go to France, then I’d have new slides that I worked into the program and introduce new places and new things.”

He said that there were so many advantages to the senior college transition, including increased student interest and attendance. “Students could acclimate to their college as freshman and then complete their four-year degree without somewhat starting the process over again when they had to transfer to a senior college, as they had to do when we were a junior college,” he remarked. Additionally, he remembered huge expansion projects, leading to many new buildings on campus. Speaking to the challenges faced, he mused, “I would say one of the biggest things was working through all of those new courses, because we [had] doubled the length of the college, that’s an awful lot of new courses you’ve got to offer.” He said that after teaching each class for the first time, it was easier to adjust, because he knew more of what to expect.

Eventually becoming the chair of the foreign language department and teaching within the GOAL (now the Degree Completion) program, Morgan remained at Gardner-Webb until his retirement in 1998. He still has several scholarships in his name, sharing, “I wanted to be a part of Gardner-Webb long after I had left [the school] and long after I have left this world.”

To our readers: Gardner-Webb University celebrated a historic milestone in May 2021—the 50th anniversary of senior college status. Transitioning to a four-year college in 1971 was the result of 10 years of planning and meeting goals. Gardner-Webb has highlighted this anniversary by publishing a series of articles featuring the stories of former faculty and alumni who experienced this significant achievement.

[View the history timeline here. \(https://gardner-webb.edu/news/timeline-of-events-leading-to-four-year-status/\)](https://gardner-webb.edu/news/timeline-of-events-leading-to-four-year-status/)

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[Former Gardner-Webb Faculty Members Remember Transition to Four-year College \(https://gardner-webb.edu/news/faculty-reflect-on-transition-to-4-year-college/\)](https://gardner-webb.edu/news/faculty-reflect-on-transition-to-4-year-college/)

[In late 60s, Gardner-Webb Gave Professors, Like Tony Eastman, Incentive to Earn Doctorates \(https://gardner-webb.edu/news/eastman-reflects-on-transition-to-4-year-status/\)](https://gardner-webb.edu/news/eastman-reflects-on-transition-to-4-year-status/)