

FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER | By Principal Tyler C. Tingley '48, '64, '01 (Hon.); P'99

This issue's feature story on alumni/ae who have returned to the Academy as faculty or staff members includes an interesting observation from the newest member of our classics department. "Being here now," Nick Unger '90 observes, "I am constantly



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reminded that a teacher never ceases to be a student."

Over the years, that has been both figuratively and literally true at the Academy. The distinguished list of Exeter students who have become Exeter instructors is filled with men and, increasingly, with women who have made indelible marks on the history of this school. Nick steps into a position from which Allan Wooley '54 has just retired. Allan himself was first a student and then a colleague of the renowned Latin teacher Herrick Macomber '26, who began teaching at the Academy in 1933 and retired in 1970.

In fact, the ranks of Exeter's legendary teachers are filled with Academy graduates. The first name that comes to mind is, of course, Hammy Bissell '29, "Mr. Exeter" to generations of Exonians and the man responsible for bringing hundreds of scholarship boys to the school. When, in 1933, he was called back to the school to teach, Hammy wrote, "It now seems

possible that I may have the opportunity of spending the rest of my life here. I could ask for nothing better."

For many readers, Charlie Pratt '52, Andy Hertig '57, Peter Greer '58 and Lew Hitzrot '60 already qualify as teaching greats. Others would cite Charles Swift '31, who taught mathematics and coached crew from 1939 to 1978. Today, his son David Swift '64 teaches math and coaches crew at the school. Still others might point to Leonard Rhoades '25, who retired in 1971, a half-century after entering the Academy as a prep, or George Bennett '23, an Exeter native of whom his colleague (and fellow alumnus) Richard Niebling '34, once said, "He was the master of the unsettling question that challenges a prejudice or puts a discussion back on the rails."

There are many qualities that these teachers past and present share. One common thread, I suspect, would be that all could name someone at Exeter who connected with them in an exceptional way. All could recall a teacher who is now here at Exeter, or who *was* here, who, by some word or act, changed them forever. For Chandra Glick '96, English teacher and rowing coach Becky Moore was one of those influences: "I could," Chandra says, "envision myself teaching and coaching crew even at 16. I could picture myself leading a Harkness discussion and talked about it to my friends. None of them are surprised that I am here."

I have shared with many of you my concern that in the next 15 years, 40 percent of the faculty will be eligible for retirement. Exeter gains immeasurably from the wide variety of experiences and perspectives found among its teachers, and many of the teachers we hire will come from outside the ranks of the alumni/ae. I do hope, though, that significant numbers of graduates will consider teaching, and that some of those teachers will return to the Academy.

Good teachers need well-trained minds, but more than that, good teachers need to have an instinct for how others come to understanding, how they confront ideas and how they overcome uncertainty. It is exactly those instincts and skills we seek to hone around the Harkness table, which makes it a great incubator for teachers. I hope that some of you who read this *Bulletin* will be able to picture yourselves back at the table.