

Pacific Remembers

This past year the Pacific community lost three special people with nearly 90 years of combined service from the ranks of emeriti faculty. Pacific Review offers this tribute for the people they were and their contribution to Pacific and the community.

Charles Clerc

By Mary-Margaret (Arnold) Simpson '73

A man who inspired many a Pacific student to relish the writing life passed away in late March. English professor and former department chair Charles Clerc taught modern literature and creative writing at Pacific for 30 years.

The outpouring of reminiscences from former students and friends included a column in *The Record* (Stockton) eulogizing "Stockton's most literate man." People recalled Dr. Clerc's wit, his love of books and writing and his warm, "regular-guy" demeanor. His exceptional career included teaching awards, published short stories, books, plays and critical studies. He wrote "The Professor Who Changed My Life" for the university's sesquicentennial, a title that aptly described Dr. Clerc for many of us.

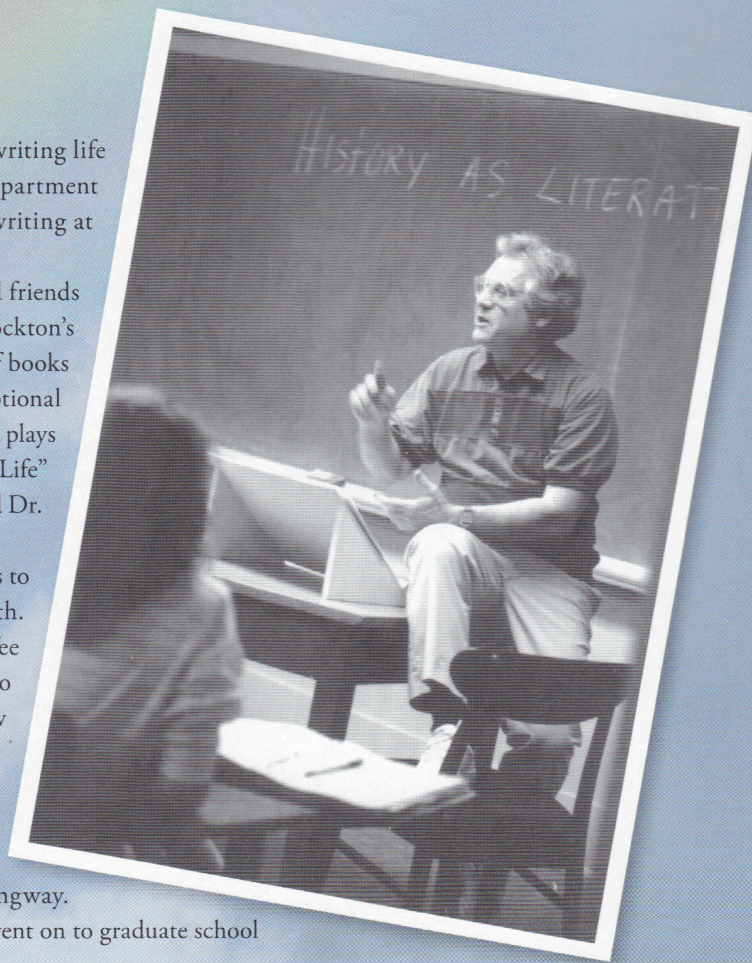
It was *who* he was as much as *what* he knew that inspired us to pursue careers in English, whether as teachers, writers, or both. Dr. Clerc walked into class carrying one or two books, a coffee mug and a look of anticipation. No notes or safety-net outline to catch him if he slipped off topic, which he rarely did. He knew his stuff, and his joy in leading us into the new world of a book was palpable and contagious.

His classes felt like coffee-house conversations with a rigorous twist. He demanded that we develop and defend our own interpretations of writers like Faulkner and Hemingway.

The task was daunting but the payoff huge: those of us who went on to graduate school arrived well-prepared and confident.

Once I was asked to teach a course in science fiction, about which I knew very little. In a panic I wrote Dr. Clerc and a week later it came: a package with books, bibliographies and a handwritten pep talk. The correspondence continued for years, as I'm sure it did with others.

With great professors like Dr. Clerc and so many others like him at Pacific, once opened, the book we write together is never closed.



Professor and department chair Charles Clerc retired in 1990.

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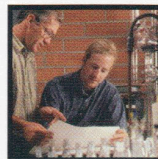
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