

A Readers' Theater Tribute to Art Young, in Three Moments:

CCCC's Exemplar Nomination, 2002

A Poem by Art, 2009

Retirement: Excerpts from Personal Letters, 2009

Delivered at the closing session of the 10th International Writing across the Curriculum Conference hosted by Campus Writing Program, Indiana University, Bloomington, 2010

Marty: Paul Anderson, Chris Thaiss, and I (Marty Townsend) are honored to have been invited by our conference hosts Jo Ann Vogt and Laura Plummer to present this tribute to Art Young who retired from Clemson University in 2009. Our remarks take the form of a Readers' Theater, using

- words written *about* Art when he was nominated for the CCCC's Exemplar Award in 2002;
- a few words *by* Art himself; and
- words written *to* him when he retired from Clemson in 2009.

Chris: We are grateful to Art's wife, Donna Reiss, who collaborated with us by surreptitiously sharing the letters from which we are quoting. We realize that Art has already read these words himself, but we believe they are worth sharing with you, so they can be appreciated by all of us in the context of our honoring Art once again and as a prelude to his closing keynote address today.

Paul: We hope, too, these words, arranged as they are, might strike you as somehow poetic, in honor of Art's extending his work with *writing* across the curriculum into *poetry* across the curriculum.

Marty: The CCCC's Exemplar Moment, 2002

Chris: In 2002, college composition's major professional organization presented to Art Young its highest honor: the CCCC's Exemplar Award. These comments appear in the letters nominating Art for that award:

Marty: Just about everything we know about...Writing Across the Curriculum comes from Art and the people who have worked with him or whose work has been informed by his.

Paul: Art is not only one of the important scholars in the field but one of its great innovators and encouragers.

Chris: He has dedicated his professional and personal life to improving learning and teaching.

Marty: He demonstrates the highest ideals of scholarship, teaching and service to the entire composition profession from elementary to graduate school.

Paul: His first love is teaching.

Chris: He has given continuous service to CCCC, as well as NCTE and MLA.

Paul: He stands at the zenith of our profession. An ideal teacher, scholar and colleague.

Chris: Both practical and visionary.

Paul: The nation's first endowed professor in Technical Communication, with a joint appointment as Full Professor of English and Engineering at Clemson University.

Marty: It was Art Young who...persuaded Angela Williams, Sylvia Gamboa, and Carl Lovitt to establish the first National Writing Across the Curriculum Conference in Charleston in 1993.

Paul: Art is open to academic difference, to efforts other than his own, to people who are not his "normal" colleagues.

Marty: A selfless and sensitive mentor who has gone out of his way to help junior faculty succeed professionally.

Chris: If I were building my dream University, Art Young would be the first faculty member I would hire.

Marty: The CCCC's Exemplar Award committee received these words from Art's long-time colleague and friend Toby Fulwiler:

Paul: When I arrived at Michigan Tech, I knew little about the field of composition.... Art introduced me to [the field and]...to the new idea called "writing across the curriculum." He has had as much to do with developing, promoting, and enacting the concept of writing across the curriculum, nationally and internationally, as anyone in the profession of English studies...

Marty: And this, also from Toby:

Paul: Art's genius in working with people is connected to his idea of scholarship as a collaborative and communal activity. From 1982 to 1992, Art and I, together, co-edited four professional books related to writing-across-the curriculum:

Chris: *Language Connections,*

Marty: *Writing Across the Disciplines,*

Chris: *Programs that Work,*

Marty: and *When Writing Teachers Teach Literature.*

Chris: This story from Elaine Maimon is particularly notable for our collective interests at this conference:

Marty: I first met Art in the late 1970's, when writing across the curriculum was new on the professional scene. I remember that he and I, along with Toby Fulwiler and a number of other young turks of that time, cornered Frank D'Angelo, who had been designated to be the chair of the next year's *CCCC*, to persuade him that writing across the curriculum should be the theme of the meeting. We won our point.

Chris: And these words from Peter Elbow added to the Exemplar Award committee's decision:

Paul: His strength...has been his ability to reach out to people in other disciplines. He's managed this because he is so professional himself and carries such a weighty but friendly ethos...he's done more than anyone I know to help people in other disciplines understand the nature of the writing process.

Marty: Chris Thaiss had this to say in his letter supporting Art's nomination:

Chris: I've witnessed Art's contributions over the years to our annual meetings of the National WAC Network at 4C's. This work epitomizes Art Young's professionalism for me: one comes to these early evening special interest meetings purely out of a desire to be of service to colleagues at other schools. There's no "billing," no audience; just fellow WAC enthusiasts and anxious program builders sitting in circles discussing practical problems. Yet Art shows up year upon year and is invariably helpful to those just starting out or rebuilding.

Paul: Recognition of Art's work has come not only from individuals in our field, but also from numerous organizations:

Chris: The Outstanding Civilian Service Medal from the Department of the Army for his...work at the United States Military Academy

Marty: The Order of the Palmetto, the highest civilian award in the State of South Carolina, for his work...at Clemson University

Chris: An Honorary Doctor of Science and Arts Degree from Michigan Technological University

Paul: The College of the Year award by Time Magazine

Chris: From international colleagues came these words:

Paul: Our programs over here in Australia are very different from those in the USA, but Art's presentations [at the University of Melbourne in 1998] were highly relevant to us.

Chris: Art Young made a great impression on the big audience [at the University of Tromsø, Norway] because his way of teaching included many of the writing-and-talking to learn strategies which he advocated....Many years later, participants are still referring to the inspiration they got at his seminar.

Marty: Culled from those letters are these comments about Art's personality:

Paul: A warm, thoughtful, caring, and honest person with a wonderful sense of humor

Chris: Helpful, gracious, generous

Paul: A quiet, modest person

Marty: Generous...and downright sweet. People *want* to work with him.

Chris: A gracious, scholarly, and down-to-earth practical guy. Never has the slightest hint of superiority

Paul: This testimony from Lillian Bridwell-Bowles offers an eloquent summary of all those characteristics:

Marty: Most people don't use the word "gentleman" as a form of high praise these days, but as a feminist who has taken on my share of patriarchs, both living and dead, I use this word about Art in the most positive way possible. Art didn't just read Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; he also read—and lives by—the best in Aristotle's *Ethics*.

Chris: By way of transitioning to the retirement moment, we offer here a very short piece by Art, which you may not have encountered in his scholarship: a clerihew.

Marty: If you don't know what a clerihew is (as I did not), *The Poet's Manual and Rhyming Dictionary* defines it as "a humorous pseudo-biographical quatrain, whimsical rather than satiric, rhymed as two couplets, with lines of uneven length more or less in the rhythm of prose."

Paul: Here is a clerihew by Art Young:

Chris: Albert Einstein had electric hair
Kept it charged on a dare.
When asked why he shocked his head
All hair is relative he said.

**Paul: The Retirement Moment: Excerpts from Personal Letters to Art
When He Left Clemson, 2009**

Chris: From Cindy Selfe:

Marty: Art Young is, quite frankly, the reason I'm a teacher and a scholar today. He hired me directly out of graduate school in 1980 and, over the next twenty-eight years, he helped me find my own way in the profession....When I identified a particularly eccentric and willful interest in computer-based writing environments, Art made a new computer classroom materialize in the old gymnasium that was being renovated as a home for our Humanities Department.

Chris: From Peter Elbow:

Paul: It's fun to think about how many years we go back....you've always helped make it so that when we could get together—at conferences and visits—our time was always special time....you realized that a quiet walk together was even better [than anything else]...I so appreciated that you were someone who made it possible for us to talk...at a deep level.

Marty: From Magnus Gustafsson:

Chris: The beauty of your simple idea with students in different countries discussing poetry in online environments and the flexibility with which you have worked in different web environments to make that possible are characteristics of your work that I will try to honour.

Paul: From Pam Childers:

Marty: One of my greatest honors was to nominate you for the CCCC Exemplar Award, and I easily found tons of people who wanted to support that nomination. I remember my tears when you got up to speak because I was so proud to call you friend.

Chris: From Chris Anson:

Paul: I think about how impossible it is to disentangle your presence from the discipline we share and the effect you've had on us all, in ways too complex and overlapping to bullet into our scholarship, our organizations, our personal lives.

Chris: From Angie Justice (Art's administrative assistant at the Pierce Center at Clemson):

Marty: Your patience and calmness are rare traits that I would love to possess. The way you handle things in a quiet and calm manner, even when chaos is all around, and the

patience you have even when I misunderstood and did not do something the way it should have been.

Chris: From Carl Lovitt:

Paul: If there was ever a watershed moment in a person's career, it took place for me [when] you took me for a drink to celebrate my getting tenure in the English department at Clemson....[and] you...had the courage to suggest that I consider a completely different career path....I could explore opportunities for scholarship and research through the Pearce Center, which you [said would] interest a much wider audience and have the potential to influence change in our profession. I trusted your insights and took your advice.

Marty: From Dixie Goswami:

Chris: I remember flying in small planes to Michigan Tech, seeing Art, as Dean of Humanities, build a program that was to influence and inspire hundreds of literature and writing teachers....I like to see him listening to a student...fully engaged, quiet...not letting on for a moment that he has anything more pressing to do...

Marty: From Lucy Rollin:

Paul: I remember once, when I was having [some] difficulties, you stopped by my office just to see how I was. I felt embarrassed by it all, but you said—and I will never forget it—"I'm your friend."I am truly lucky for that.

Marty: One of the most beautiful things about Art is that he makes everyone feel as though he is a friend to them. Will you all join us now in recognizing our friend Art Young?