The Good Man Speaking Well



A tribute to

MAX PETER PAGE

Edited by James Lander

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recipient of the first TASIS Master Teacher Award

TASIS The American School in England Thorpe, Surrey June 2003

Edited by Dr. James Lander

MASTER TEACHER AWARD CITATION: MAX PAGE

A friend of our family who has been the Headmaster of prominent independent schools in the USA has said that the most important part of his job is the hiring of faculty. Perhaps our own chief criterion in hiring headmasters is the realization that it is the Headmaster who staffs the school with the people who interact most closely with students - and may do so long after the Headmaster who hired them has departed.

In inaugurating the TASIS Master Teacher Award, to be given occasionally, we wish to honor one teacher. This selection is not intended to diminish the achievements of the many dedicated teachers who have worked long and hard years and have not been given such special recognition - many of them in this room now. Over the years they have been too numerous to be named just now or rewarded as we would like to reward them. We cannot adequately reward every teacher who has given the schools good service. Nevertheless, at my recommendation the TASIS Foundation Board decided to inaugurate an award to recognize and honor particularly meritorious service, service of an unusually high order over an unusually long period of time. This award is funded by the TASIS Foundation and several alumni.

The TASIS Master Teacher Award is a generous financial gift to an individual teacher and will be given on an occasional basis. To inaugurate the award we have chosen as the recipient Max Peter Page, who has served TASIS and its students at the schools in both Switzerland and England for thirty-five years, from 1968 to 2003. In addition to the award which we present tonight, we are presenting Max with a specially printed and illustrated volume of tributes from many of his former students and former and present colleagues. I have had the honor of reading these tributes and, along with our colleague Dr. James Lander, the Editor, of helping to assemble them for the volume. To read these tributes has been a deeply moving experience. I think we must say that these expressions of gratitude and indebtedness to Max Page, for deep, noble, and abiding memories and the development of talents, are perhaps better than any other method or evidence for articulating the heart of the mission of a good school. And that we are such a good school is due to many people in this room, as Max would surely wish me to point out, but to no one more than Max himself.

About fifty years ago, at the end of his autobiography and near the end of his life, the great Scottish poet Edwin Muir wrote the following: "When we talk of our development I fancy we mean little more than that we have changed with the changing world; and if we are writers or intellectuals that our ideas have changed with the changing fashions of thought, and therefore not always for the better. I think that if any of us examines his life he will find that most good has come to him from a few loyalties, and a few discoveries made many generations before he was born, which must always be made anew."

Max's loyalty to TASIS and to his own high aims for literary competence in his students have enabled many hundreds of them to make those discoveries anew, and thus to develop not only competence, but character, culture, and ethics.

It gives me great pleasure to present the first TASIS Master Teacher Award to Max Peter Page.

Lynn F. Aeschliman, Executive Director, The TASIS Schools

Presented at the Senior Banquet at TASIS The American School in England on June 6, 2003.

DONORS TO THE MASTER TEACHER AWARD FOR MAX PAGE

Andrew Bartels (TASIS England, 1979) [See tribute under "1979"]

Chuck Burkert (TASIS Switzerland, 1972)

Kerry Carnahan (TASIS England, 1984)

[Kerry's generous donation included this note: "Best wishes to Mr. Page. He made a real difference to me and to so many others. Thanks to him for showing me real academic challenge."]

The Fatum Family, including former colleague Barb and alumnae Elizabeth (TASIS England 1999) and Michael (2003) [See tribute from Beth under "1999"]

Dorry Kenyon (TASIS Switzerland, 1974) [See tribute under "1974"]

Betsy Miller (TASIS England, 1982)

Bachar Samawi (TASIS England, 1983)

[Bachar's generous donation included this note: "I certainly believe that TASIS has played a major role in my success, and that's primarily due to some of the highly dedicated teachers who instructed me, such as Mr. Page."]

Donald Schriber (TASIS Switzerland, 1970) [See tribute under "1970"]

Kristen Jackson Seymour (TASIS England, 1982) [See tribute under "1982"]

Christina Sorak formerly Tina Bostick (TASIS England, 1986)

David Sullivan (TASIS England, 1987) [See tribute under "1987"]

The TASIS Foundation

The Twining Family, parents of Jim (TASIS England, 1998), Nick (1999), and Elizabeth (2005)

Katherine Walsh (TASIS England, 1992) [See tribute under "1992"]

The Wicks Family, parents of Robert (TASIS England, 1999), Michael (2000), and Catherine (2007) Wicks. [See tribute from Michael under "2000"]

Patricia Johnson Williams (TASIS England, 1985)

A am a strong believer in the influence an individual, a single human being, can have in a small or large way on other human beings or even on history.

Max Page is such an individual.

Over a period of thirty-five years at TASIS, Max has influenced and inspired hundreds, even thousands of students, has given them a love of literature and of learning. So many of his students have written that nowhere, not even in university, have they met a match for Max as a master and outstanding teacher.

Max has most assuredly been a pillar of TASIS, a symbol of the excellence for which TASIS strives.

My very dear Max, you have my boundless gratitude as well as that of the hundreds of students who have been privileged to study under your inspired teaching. You will remain forever in their memory.

With heartfelt thanks to my dear friend,

M. Crist Fleming

TASIS Founder and Director Emeritus



The educational ideal is the good man speaking well.
- Quintilian (35-100 A.D.), De Institutione Oratoria



THE GOOD MAN SPEAKING WELL is an apt title for this book of tributes to a good man who has always tried to seek, speak, and defend the true and the good. Though we are often cinbarrassed nowadays by the very language of virtue, it has to be said that Max Peter Page has had an exemplary career as a person of high principles, standards, and integrity; he is a man who has dedicated his life to passing on the great tradition of the literary canon of Western Civilization to generations of young people and to making them effective participants in the continuation and vitality of that civilization by improving their powers of discrimination, appreciation, speech, and writing. It is a humbling and edifying experience to read these tributes to a true Master Teacher, to get a glimpse of how deeply Max has touched and shaped the lives of so many of his students over three and a half decades. Max has been dogged in his own pursuit of the good and in his dedication to inducting young people into the great legacy of the best that has been written and expressed in prose and poetry in the English language. Max has fought a noble fight against many of the idiocies, fads, and follies of the last half-century, yet he has been modest enough not to pretend to be above the fray. Surely he has sometimes been confused, disappointed, discouraged, and even battered by the arduous tasks of teaching in the 'values' field of language use and literary study. But Max has armed his students with the ballast to survive stormy seas and rough nights and to sail by bright stars and good charts, not by passing moods and fashions.

On behalf of all of his thousands of students and of the two fine TASIS institutions that he has been instrumental in helping to shape, guide, and elevate for thirty-five years, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Max Peter Page, a Master Teacher. May God bless you always, Max!

"Have you ever really had a teacher? One who saw you as a raw but precious thing, a jewel that, with wisdom, could be polished to a proud shine? If you are lucky enough to find your way to such teachers, you will always find your way back" (Mitch Albom, Tuesdays with Morrie). And into the heads and the hearts of myriad students, Max has found his way. What a wonderful gift and noble life — a good man speaking well.

Lynn Fleming Aeschliman Executive Director of TASIS

THIRTY FIVE YEARS OF DEDICATION TO EXCELLENCE

In 1972, fresh out of Design School and newly-married, I came to TASIS to find the Lugano campus in disarray from combining the Vezia and Montagnola campuses into one. Kate and I went off to Spain on our honeymoon with little confidence that the school would be ready to open its doors in two week's time. Upon our return not only was the school ready, but we were hosted by the faculty to celebrate our marriage, along with Max and Marcia Page and Akbar and Wendy Khan, also newly-weds and already TASIS veterans: quite an august group to be part of! It was our first introduction to TASIS and it strikes me now in retrospect how appropriate an introduction it was and how little TASIS has changed: "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose"!

It is what I have come to love at TASIS – that constancy and commitment to excellence, tradition, and values which have stood the test of time. There is no one I know who better personifies this than Max Page, a master teacher and mentor for a generation of colleagues at TASIS. Max has been an inspiration to those of us who have grown up at TASIS and who have seen the School mature into an outstanding institution with a heart. It is because Max cares that his contributions are so meaning ful.

It has been a privilege and honor to have shared that experience with Max. It is said that no one is irreplaceable, and yet I know TASIS will not be the same without Max. We will miss his outstanding teaching skills, his wise counsel, his dedication to excellence, and most of all his presence as a symbol of continuity and all that represents the best of TASIS. He has been instrumental in making TASIS a special school and his example and leadership have inspired us for the past thirty-five years. We are fortunate to be left with his legacy, one that will live on well into the future. It is left to us who remain to pass on to others new to TASIS the continuing tradition of excellence. We have had an inspired leader to show us the way. Thank you Max, and may you enjoy your richly-deserved retirement knowing that you have touched the lives of thousands so profoundly, as illustrated in this tribute.

Fernando L. Gonzalez Administrative Director of TASIS

Editor's Note

It has been a great pleasure to edit these tributes to Max Page, and it is indeed a tribute in itself that the writings by Max's former students required little editing. The inspiration, content and production of this collection owe a great deal to Lynn and Michael Aeschliman, Sarah Di Lenardo and Clive Ungless. As editor, I take the blame for anomalies which have survived my attempts to standardize spelling, punctuation and format. I also fleshed out abbreviations in one post-card, prefaced some items where it seemed useful, and excised some surplus salutations, but retained all information on addresses. The order is chronological by graduating class-year, though I have interspersed, in like fashion, a number of tributes which some of Max's colleagues wrote especially for this volume or in a previous compilation. The literary quotations were selected by Michael Aeschliman, who also wrote the "Afterword."

The admiration, respect, gratitude and love which pour from these tributes clearly reflect the same qualities which Max has lavished (in his own inimitable way) on his students and colleagues through four decades, and I can merely echo what many others have quoted from Max's beloved KING LEAR: "Nothing comes from Nothing."

- Dr. James Lander

1969

CELESTE CLEMENT

I was a student of Mr. Page in his first year of teaching at TASIS. I remember this very tall, thin, charming man who taught us Milton and the love of English literature. He had class and a heart and although I was not close to him (usually just another average student) my boyfriend at the time, Tom Mitchell, was honored by receiving the English literature award of excellence at graduation. From Don and the boys in the dorm I remember I heard a story about Mr. Page sleeping in the bathtub so he could escape the noise of being dorm parent to a bunch of boys!

Wishing him happiness in his retirement and as always great memories and love for TASIS.

Celeste Clement Three Falls 615 King of Prussia Rd. Radnor, PA 19087

PETER W. STEVENS

[Peter was headmaster at TASIS Switzerland from 1975 to 1979 and at TASIS England from 1980 to 1982]

My dear Max,

old ratty briefcase that you used to carry around, preparing to teach your last class, give the last examination, grade the last essay. And then what: fade off into dusty and damp booklined studies and contemplate your literary navel? Somehow, I doubt all that. Sure, it may be time not to do it all officially and formally, not to stride into the Salon anymore and strut and fret your hour upon that stage, but I doubt that you will be heard no more. I'm not sure we could take that, we who have known you all these years, known you as a bulwark against ignorance, a challenger of the dark, a standard bearer of and for the right and the light, a beacon for learning.

And you have been all these things. Oh, sure, when I was your Headmaster in both Switzerland and England we had our differences. You had your impatience with yet one more

American headmaster: certain I (we) would come and go. And I had my own goals tried by your idiosyncrasies. But mostly, you know, we jelled, you and I, and somehow together (in England, anyway, where we had true mountains to climb) we built an absolutely marvelous school. Well, we helped build it, anyway.

And I believe we built it on integrity, I hope some of mine, but certainly a lot of yours (yes, others played their roles, too, but I am not writing about them). For I could always count on you for integrity in absolutely everything you did, even when I found myself irritated: you were a constant, a rock. I have always, Always, appreciated that, during those years, and since, just as your students appreciated it then and since.

My years with TASIS, while far fewer than yours, are absolutely vivid, even now 20 years after I left Thorpe, and they are the clear high points of my school career, and in many ways, my life. When I play tapes from those years through my head, a cast of characters passes by, key players in the drama. I see you there, Max: taciturn, grumpy at times, back turned in faculty meetings as you contemplate some far-off ideal that this young headmaster could not possibly see, somewhere way out there over the lake, warming your hands over the radiator in the library in Hadsall House, or presiding over the seminar table in the Thorpe Place Salon, eyes flashing in class as you tried to whet young and wandering minds, or standing up for personal values and standards in Governing Board meetings. Ah, there are many scenes, more than this short reminiscence can present.

And they all remind me of integrity.

You gave me a book once, Max. Remember? It was called Anchor and Hope. Well, I have not always been the anchor, but the metaphor was hardly lost on me. Now, it's my turn. I am sending you a book, Stories of the Courage to Teach. Sam Intrator, the book's editor, a Professor of Education at Smith College, and a friend of mine, writes this in his Introduction, quoting his own schoolteacher-father:

"We'd better figure out how to get good people into our classrooms and then figure out how to keep them fresh and alive. We don't recognize how hard teaching is on the spirit. We think it's about little techniques and tricks, but techniques only take you so far. We need teachers who care about kids, who care about what they teach, and who can connect with their students. On

top of that, they need to have faith in the importance of their work. Keeping that faith over time hasn't been easy for me."

And I imagine that keeping that faith over time has not been easy for you, Max. But it is to your credit that you have, and it is to the benefit of hundreds of minds, young and older, that you have.

Thank you for being you.

My warmest greetings and respect, and indeed my love, to you and Marcia.

Peter W. Stevens 270 S. Shelburne Rd. Shelburne, MA 01370 413-625-9906 [pwstevens@juno.com]

1970

LAURA K. SNOOK

A was one of the fortunate students who took AP English from Max Page. My continuing appreciation of Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas - all literature, in fact - is imbued with the experiences of Mr. Page's class. Max Page guided my first journeys into literary analysis, thus enhancing all my subsequent reading, and attendance at plays. I came to appreciate the aesthetic of the sound of the words of poetry through his reading aloud of this great literature - and having us do the same. I will never forget how he encouraged one shy student to read aloud by promising he'd stand on his head if she did. She did - and he did! I still remember some of the wonderful passages from Shakespeare plays that I memorized in preparation for a classroom session where each of us spent half an hour or so writing, from memory, literary passages we had each chosen from the works we were studying.

I remember, too, how he pushed us to express ourselves through the written word - literally. He had us write our essays in longhand, and then critiqued not only our use of the language, but our writing of it - not because he was concerned about our penmanship, but because he wanted us to pay attention to the way our writing revealed how we felt about our own ideas. He considered small, neat, tentative handwriting to reveal a lack of confidence, and encouraged

us to be bold, to push ourselves to new limits and explore new horizons. He held us to high standards - and gave us the confidence to realize that we could perform at the highest levels. He extended this mentoring outside the classroom, too. He sat at the head of the table where I ate my meals, and conversation was always rich. Max provided inspiration and counsel as we made decisions about our lives - it was he who told me I should aspire to an Ivy League college.

I was so inspired by the literature and writing classes Max taught that it seemed natural to build on them by majoring in humanities. It was only years after I graduated (and had followed my interest in literature to a job in publishing) that I realized that I wanted to use my analytical and writing skills in an arena more closely linked to the natural world that I'd previously considered the purview only of weekends and vacations. I went on to become an ecologist. While I now study trees and forests, I have spent most of my career as a professor. Max has been a role model - a teacher, who challenged, built professional skills, and inspired enthusiasm, not only for the subject, but for learning. I thank him for the many ways his teaching has enriched both my professional and my personal life, and wish him all the best during the years ahead.

Laura Snook

(Currently Principal Scientist, Program in Environmental Services and Sustainable Use of Forests, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Bogor, Indonesia: [l.snook@cgiar.org]

CATHERINE BADIN

[Catherine enclosed a poem which she said was written in 1998.] Hope he'll remember it. Please do give him my very best!

MAX PETER PAGE

Max Peter Page Knew T.S. Eliot Max Peter Page Walked with a cane. Max Peter Page Was crisply articulate Max Peter Page Gave me an "A." Max Peter Page Are you back in your homeland? Max Peter Page Where there's verdant of green Max Peter Page Are you sharing with poets? Max Peter Page And, are you living your dream?

> Catherine Badin [badcat@popstar.com] [www.catherinebadin.com.]

DON SCHRIBER

[Don accompanied this tribute with a generous donation to the Master Teacher Award for Max Page.]

The fortunate time I spent with Max Page was during my senior year (1969 -1970) in his English IV class. Donne, Milton, Pope, and Shakespeare were the basis of the experience. I say experience because Max's approach went beyond teaching; he shared his passion and

brought this art and these artists to life through his readings. He was able to motivate and lead us through the "noise" of being teenagers. On reflection, that was a tremendous undertaking since he served the role of resident adult as well as teacher. He showed me the music of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and to this day, 34 years later, I can still recite most of this poem. Max got through to me and I am a better person as a result.

Max Page, I hope you feel the same way about your career as I do in my short time as your student. You are a wonderful and gifted educator. You have mastered the art of education and that may be the greatest art of all. I wish you the best.

Don Schriber Vice President, GWES - South Earth Tech Atlanta [don.schriber@earthtech.com]



Max teaching in Lugano, circa 1971

1971

EVELYN GUSTAFSSON

There are three teachers whose names remain with me: Akbar Khan, Bob Wilson and Max Page. The others are also remembered for their quirks or teaching habits but not their names.

Beyond every doubt, Max Page - in my senior year at TASIS Vezia 1970-1971 - made a lasting impression. Naturally, at that time his strictness was not appreciated; however, it served to prepare one's future (at least mine) in some way or other. Thanks to him, I was awarded the Prize for Excellence in British Literature at Graduation in 1971. That came as a complete surprise to me. Maybe his comment in my notebook should have given me a hint: "precise, concise." Believe it or not, I kept my notes from that year.

My very best wishes go to Max Page - relax, enjoy your retirement no matter what your hobbies are. You will be busier retired than when employed. Take care of your health. Allow your wife and family, and friends, to take care of you.

Evelyn Gustafsson [erg3214@bluewin.ch]

CINDY ENGISCH LISNER

A was in Max Page's English class during 1970-71 for my senior year in Vezia, Switzerland. The notes I took in class, religiously recopied during study hall in rapidograph pen and complete with minute illustrations, followed so closely what he said in class that he asked me to photocopy them for future reference. Unfortunately, in my wanderings from continent to continent these notes have long since disappeared, but perhaps Mr. Page still has them in his personal archives from about 30 years ago!

I will never forget his brilliant explanations of texts ranging from John Donne to Shakespeare's Tempest and T.S. Eliot's Waste land. He absolutely captured the magic and the incredible richness of the English language through British Literature. His classes remain part of the best memories I have of TASIS. Thank you MPP!

The year I graduated, we dedicated our yearbook to him. See the excellent photograph of him with the umbrella!

Cindy Engisch Lisner [cindy.lisner@laposte.net]

NANCY HUBBARD CARTY

Dear Mr. Page.

I have recently heard through various TASIS connections that you will retire this year in June. I wanted to take this opportunity as a former student of yours to thank you for all your wonderful years of service to TASIS and your tireless dedication to the teaching profession.

I am sure you have had several thousand students by now, so allow me to properly introduce myself. In my former life, I was Nancy Lee Hubbard and I attended TASIS Switzerland from 1969-1971. I was fortunate to have you as my senior English professor for a comprehensive survey of British literature in 1970-1971.

I must tell you that I loved your class, and I appreciated the structure that you taught us as integral to the writing process. Writing is after all a tremendous discipline, and your words and your actions reflected the care and attention we needed to take in attempting to craft our personal thoughts in writing and speaking the English language.

I have always been aware of the fact that I am a writer of average abilities. I do, however, enjoy writing and the talents I now possess are largely due to your efforts. In college I took a number of English literature classes, but the one year under your tutelage had the greatest impact on me.

I have many fond memories of you as a teacher, but one memory in particular stands alone. I recall that we had moved to St. Moritz for the winter term, and our classroom was located on the second floor of the Hotel Laudinella. I remember this particular day because you chose to read to us towards the end of the class. (I regret that I cannot recall the specific author. It may have been a sonnet written by John Donne.) I remember that you began to read aloud, and within a few minutes I was very aware of how deeply moved you were by the author's words. In fact you became so overwhelmed with emotion that you simply stopped reading, glanced up, and then quietly left the room.

The class sat quietly there for a good five minutes, as we were in utter amazement. You could have heard a pin drop. A short time passed, and we simultaneously realized that you were not going to return that day, and so we quietly gathered up our cumbersome blue book bags and left the room.

What I want to convey in recounting this seemingly small moment, is that it was this experience that helped me to understand the capacity of words to move the human spirit. Instead of the characters in the play experiencing the emotion, I saw how you were part of that world on the page. All fall term, you had cited numerous examples from Shakespeare and Dante's Inferno to help illustrate to us how literature grappled with all the great themes of life. I found myself wishing that I too could somehow connect with the words on the page and wished that my life experience at eighteen could be fuller and wiser so that I might be able to grasp the full significance of what I was reading each day.

I too am older now and have had more lessons of life from which to draw upon. When I read a familiar passage of many of the great classics I have studied, I appreciate and am continually amazed by the words I read. I want to thank you for giving me this lifelong appreciation of literature. I am also convinced that many of your former students feel as I do.

The senior English exam that you gave to my class in 1971 in Lugano dealt with the life work of T.S. Eliot. I am the individual who misspelled the author's last name throughout the entire exam. (Perhaps this will jog your memory of me.) Your closing comment to me was: "It is spelled ELIOT, one T!" These words of wisdom were followed by: "Shape your sentences, and use a thesaurus when you write," with the familiar signature, Max Peter Page. Your parting words have served me well. To this day, I use a dictionary and I try to take care in crafting my words.

In closing, I would like to add that I chose to go into the teaching profession. I am now in my twenty-second year of teaching Visual Art Studio and Art History to high school students in Raleigh, North Carolina. You should know that your standard of excellence in the classroom is a very difficult act to follow.

I wish you all the best as you begin your new journey. May God be with you. You have my very best wishes and congratulations on a job well done. I will certainly be with you in spirit on your upcoming farewell celebration.

Most sincerely,

Nancy Hubbard Carty [ncarty@mindspring.com]



Max Page, Marcia Page, Sue Blessing and Ken Blessing

MARY MURFIN BAYLEY

At seems impossible to put down in five hundred words or less what it meant to me to have Max Peter Page as an English teacher in my senior year. As a journalist and arts critic I am used to attempting to fit big subjects into small spaces. If this particular task felt overwhelming it is simply because I've spent much of my adult life trying to put into words the passion of Mr. Page.

As we sat in AP English classes (the girls in skirts and the boys in neckties, still required attire in 1971), the U.S. had invaded Cambodia, the boys in the room were worried about their draft status and drugs, flowers, beads and free love were in the news. Mr. Page walked in, definite and ascetic in his suit and vest. He looked us over with a witty intensity that flashed through the thick glass of his spectacles and showed us what it meant to pay attention.

He taught us to care about the words and the metaphors. Donne's "Break, batter, bend, three personned god," T.S. Eliot's shuffling Prufrock: "I hear the mermaids singing each to each. I do not think that they will sing to me." He showed us how words could keep shedding layers of meaning like Goethe's onion.

He brought alive to us the richness of our great literature, but he didn't stop there. He was not afraid to tell us what he himself believed in clear and absolute terms, a rare gift of moral structure in a time of moral deconstruction. "How can you pursue enlightenment from Eastern religions when you haven't taken the time to understand the religion of your own culture?" Or: "Sexual love has no meaning if you equate it with entertainment and take it out of the context of marriage." Or: "If you use your skills and your talent to the best of your ability every single day, you need have no fear of dying."

This wisdom of Mr. Page was never preached to us. It came directly from the context of the literature he taught. It came directly from his self, as he stood there, even though he was surely then a relatively young man, a living example of the true way to work and be in order to live a good life.

Mary Murfin Bayley [MaryBayley@aol.com]



The end of poetry is not imitation, but rather delightful instruction by which the habits of men's minds are brought to right reason, so that through them man may achieve perfect action, which is called Beatitude.

- Julius Caesar Scaliger, Poetices libri septem (1561)



1972

DARCY POWERS

Max Page was my mentor when I attended TASIS from 1969-1972 and to this day he remains my personal inspiration as an English professor, as a human being, and as a friend.

Meeting Mr. Page when I did, when I was a teenager - naive, vain, ignorant, opinionated, etc. - was saving grace.

His formality, decorum, protocol, professionalism, and encyclopedic knowledge didn't scare me. These very real attributes of Max Page were not a mask of any kind, so they did not obscure any of his other equally genuine qualities: his sensitivity, humor, and understanding.

He is a rare man, and he has my abiding love and respect. And gratitude, for being such a fine example of what one can do with a mind and heart.

With faith and dedication.

(Max, please forgive the fragments, but sometimes I think they emphasize.)

Darcy Powers

DAN GRESSETT

And so now, I shift my mystic silent stare
From majestic swirls of art Van Gogh
To lecture hall and walls of chalk glazed board,
For then, I was too young to know.

"What unstudied lesson does a story teach us?
Only that of which the mute will speak."
From his pulpit still he teaches
From measured time that teaspoons leak.

And so now I, the voice of many, sing out and hope
To touch the soul of Pope,
"The whole page and nothing but the page"
So help me God!

I was awed by the man, humming a tune He was reading from a sheet of music.

I began my recital and stumbled. I stopped and asked if I could begin again. A nod to do so and afterward, "Well done," I received from this man.

I received from this man.

Dan Gressett 3708 Tanner Midland, TX 79703

SUSAN GURNEY IN TRIBUTE TO MAX PAGE, MASTER TEACHER

Having had the good fortune to be one of Mr. Page's students, writing an essay in tribute to him as a teacher is only fitting, and should be easy work for those of us who wrote for him in class.

The first time I met Max Page I was sixteen. It was my first time away from home, and I was to spend one year in Vezia. We had been asked to read poems by Marlowe and Donne, and I sat before him in the expectation that I would be able to answer any question he might ask about the assignment. I do not remember what he asked, nor what I, in my eagerness to respond, said when he called upon me. I do remember his response:

"Miss Gurney," he said, with that unique and startling combination of sternness, humor, gentleness and irony, "how many times have you read this poem of Donne's?"

"Twice," I replied, honestly, not yet understanding.

"Twice," he repeated. His look spoke volumes, more than any insertion of the world "only" could ever have done. He may have coughed, I think, slightly, in order not to smile.

That Christmas, he designated me as one to read from the Bible for the holiday service. "But I am a Jewish atheist," I proclaimed.

"Of course you are," he said, politely.

I read, I think, from Corinthians - II or III - even atheists can know humility in the face of understanding.

I can remember listening to him read to us from Milton's "Paradise Lost," standing as we sat before him in the classroom, that light-filled spring of the year when he first came to know the young art history teacher who was to be his wife. And there were times that year when it was I who was lost, and he noticed, and gave a word of encouragement.

I realize that writing this will not begin to do justice to that experience, or to many other ways, within and without the classroom, in which he brought his humanity to us. So perhaps this is not so simple: because there are so many memories, and reasons, and because I am not quite as young. But I can be deeply grateful, and I can say thank you - and I can go read John Donne again.

Susan Gurney [sgurney@nyc.rr.com]

ERIC OLIVER

A was one of Mr. Page's AP English students in 1971-72. For some of us, those years brought a sometimes bizarre mix of draft lottery anxieties, sudden and eager (if well-cushioned) independence, easy cynicism, and only a vague appreciation of history's or literature's parts in our lives.

Though my grades were pretty high, as was my interest in the lessons, it's safe to say I was among Max's "problem pupils." This was no doubt made even more challenging for him as he was my advisor as well. While the wake left by my "youthful indiscretions" was really not all that wide or deep, my TASIS passage was not free of difficulty. In my yearbook, Mr. Page, with typical, pointed economy, suggested that some of my more distressing escapades could prove ultimately valuable. He wrote, PER ARDUA, AD ASTRA. For me, every recollection of

Shakespeare or the synoptic gospels down in the dungeons in Lugano is also accompanied by Max's voice intoning Ezra Pound or T.S. Eliot.

Max once told us that it was very easy to get started in writing. "Simply write a thousand words a day, on any subject, and in 90 days you will be ready to begin learning to write." While my primary work involves consulting with attorneys in a sometimes Sisyphean task of helping them get along with, and perhaps persuade, regular human beings, I did end up doing a little writing. Max features in the acknowledgments of both books I've had published, and will again in the one due out later this year. My writing has even appeared in a couple of the most read legal journals in the country, despite the fact that I am not a lawyer.

I spent last week lecturing a cadre of trial lawyers at Harvard Law School, a place I had serious doubts I'd ever even visit back when Mr. Page was assuring me he fully expected I could rise to whatever challenges life presented. So far, he was quite correct, though I'm sure he knew I had my doubts as he said it.

Eric Oliver MetaSystems, Ltd. 42015 Ford Rd. #224 Canton, MI 48187 [MetaSystEO@aol.com]

1973

MELITTA JALKANEN

The people of my province in Eastern Finland have a reputation of big-mouthed untrustworthiness. The saying is that when someone from Savo speaks, the responsibility for the statement is the listener's. In this case, however, I will try to be straightforward. And I take full responsibility for what I'm saying, for the facts and for the way I'm stating them. The latter is important as my poor English and lack of style could be construed as weaknesses in the education I received from my English teacher, Mr Page.

There are two proofs to the contrary. Until the age of eleven I lived in a totally Finnish-speaking environment, home and school. It is not impossible, even that late, to acquire a native-speaker proficiency, if one is a hard worker. I wasn't. As to style: my secondary school experience with Mr Page transmitted enough of a passion for language for me to study languages at

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University. However, I never had patience with text analysis and all that. I am an avid reader, but at a totally amateur, layman level. What I loved was linguistics, phonetics, sociolinguistics, the practical, tangible, down-to-earth stuff. I have scrambled on all fours over steep Ticino hillsides, clutching a notebook in my teeth, following a native informant, jotting down names of pastures and brooks in phonetical writing. I have taught basic Italian to mixed groups of children from Somalia, Kosovo and Colombia. I have struggled to establish communication with Alzheimer patients. And for all this I have Mr Page to thank.

Yes, he did teach us phonetics, but anyone could have done that. He taught us more. I well remember one lesson: we were told to write our names in phonetic script, and I puffed up in chauvinistic pride over the cleverness and superiority of my mother tongue which, similarly to Italian, is nearly phonetic. I wrote my name the way it's normally written. Mr Page asked me to say my name, and to listen to what I was saying. The differences were small, but they were there, and I had to admit that my language wasn't better than others – and that a true professional knew more about my language than I did. I don't pretend that I have become a better person, but I do remember to listen carefully, observe the realities, and not to judge on suppositions and prejudices. It may not seem a big deal, but imagine if Mr Bush and some others had had a teacher like Mr Page!

So much for academic discipline.

But another thing has marked me for life. Fellow alumni and alumnae may remember the paper we wrote on for tests. Narrow slips, half a handwidth, that Mr Page efficiently and routinely tore from scrap sheets, were perfectly adequate for the weekly ten items of information that we were required to jot down, to see how we were progressing. No need for whole virgin white pages for something that wasn't going to be framed and hung on the wall anyway. The recycled stuff satisfied the purpose perfectly. No cost, no waste, no damage.

Now it may well be that I would have become an environmental activist anyway. But it is also true that key experiences do determine the course of lives. I have heard that once you have become a gherkin you will never be a cucumber again. It is the same with a person's attitude to the use of the resources at hand. Once you have seen the difference between intelligent, creative, respectful methods and mindless, careless, sloppy waste, you just cannot go on with the flow of things without taking responsibility and living it.

So it is because of Mr Page that I am on the Green list in the April elections for the Ticino parliament. And use public transportation. And wear a sweater instead of turning up the heating. And eat strawberries in June and chestnuts in November. And listen before shooting.

Thank you, Mr Page.

Melitta Jalkanen Via Noseda 15 6977 Ruvigliana Switzerland [bernard.keller@bluewin.ch]

RICHARD D'A. JENSEN

In late September 1969 I walked into Max Page's freshman English class and was immediately challenged. All assignments were to be written in ink, no erasures allowed (Liquid Paper did not yet exist), only a single line was to be used to correct errors and, worst of all, we had to write in script. I hated Mr. Page. . . for about a week. For the next four years I idolized the man! He introduced me to the classics of English literature, fencing, and afternoon tea. We had it at the Palace Hotel in St. Moritz, Campione, on Lake Lugano, and in my senior year, at the Pages' first house. I became a devout Anglophile, walked with a cane (for effect only), and indulged in afternoon tea every day at 4 PM for the next ten years! I even taught a class at Pomona College in English Tea Drinking.

We also shared music. As most of you know, Mr. Page is an exceptional musician. (Keep in mind that fifteen years after graduation I served a brief stint as a music critic for the Los Angeles Times, so I know what I'm talking about!) At the time he played recorder and we played recorder-guitar duets in student-faculty recitals. He drove me to a number of concerts including a few in a neighboring mountain village that were particularly memorable. We even heard a recital of guitar and recorder duets!

I've been very fortunate in the fact that Max and I continue to correspond. Indeed, Mrs. Fleming's eightieth birthday marked the occasion of our last reunion. I'll never forget being served afternoon tea in Max's back garden. I saw a lot of Max and Marcia that week, and I look forward to seeing them again.

One last memory: at the 1972 prom I remember wandering around the premises and being shocked to find Mr. Page and Miss Hessemer ballroom dancing in the kitchen. They returned the following September as a married couple. Several years later I saw the 1939 movie "Goodbye Mr. Chips." It was Mr. Page's story! Only Max played the part much better than the actor Robert Donat.

Max, you will always be my hero!

Richard d'A. Jensen, Ph.D. 100 Reed Blvd. #1 Mill Valley, CA 94941-2428 [drrdajensen@hotmail.com]



The Art of Letters... is a study adapted to all times and to all circumstances, to the investigation of fresh knowledge, or to the recasting and application of old. Hence the importance of grammar and of the rules of composition must be recognized at the outset, as the foundation on which the whole study of Literature must rest: and closely associated with these rudiments, the art of disputation or logical argument. The function of this is to enable us to discern fallacy from truth in discussion. Logic, indeed, as setting forth the true method of learning, is the guide to the acquisition of knowledge in whatever subject. Rhetoric comes next, and is strictly speaking the formal study by which we attain the art of eloquence.

 Vergerius, De Ingenuis Moribus (1404); English translation by W.H. Woodward in Vittorio da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators (Cambridge, 1897), 107.



CHRISTINE PENROSE

[This arrived as postcard, addressed to Mr. Page, but it was somehow intercepted and conveyed to the editor, who will see that the addressee eventually receives it so be can enjoy the picture of the Côte d'Azur.]

Dear Mr. Page,

didn't want to write a 500-word essay, but I did want you to know I do remember your fuscinating dissection of Macbeth. As a matter of fact, I spoke just the other day of you and your English class at TASIS Switzerland, where I was a Senior in 1973. And, of course, you were the best and clearest of teachers, and you provided a most lucid untwisting of the characters and nuances of Macbeth. I am so grateful to you for making it so easy, fun, interesting and most importantly - logical. I had thought your course would bore me, but in the end I came to look forward to it every day. And I did get an A-! Thank you for your understanding and perception of the English language.

Christine Penrose

1974

SHELLIE RUSTON MUNN

When I took AP English from Mr. Page, it was only a dream and a space to fill out on college appplications, to become a lawyer. Because of what I learned from Mr. Page, I not only fulfilled that dream to become an attorney, but also I became an editor and was published in the Denver tournal of International Law and Policy as well as other legal publications. Mr. Page's AP was unique and fun. I did have a lot of trouble getting up at 8:00 at the time.

Thank you Mr. Page. Without you, I would not have received the solid foundation that I meded, nor would I have the love of reading that I do today.

Very sincerely yours,

Shellie Ruston Munn Cherry Hills Village, Colorado

DORRY M. KENYON

[Dorry's e-mail was prefaced with a sentiment similarly offered by many other alumni: "Thank you for giving me this opportunity finally to express my long overdue gratitude to one of the most important teachers in my life." Dorry accompanied this tribute with a generous donation to the Master Teacher Award for Max Page.]

Dear Mr. Page:

Filthrough the years I have often wanted to write a "thank-you" to you but never did. Yes, I am guilty. Like the ten who were richly blessed, I am numbered among the nine who sought more to enjoy the gift received than to turn back and thank the giver. May this feeble tribute in some small way make up for almost three decades of silence.

Frankly, I had never liked English. Though I love language, it's linguistics—more specifically language testing—that has occupied my professional life at the Center for Applied Linguistics (Washington, D.C.) since 1987. And though I love to read, my time is spent almost entirely with non-fictional writing. I even got through a BA, two Master's degrees, and a Ph.D. with only one English course after yours, a mandatory freshman writing seminar. Yet the benefits acquired under your tutelage in English and Shakespeare during my senior year at TASIS Switzerland have lasted these many years! I would like to mention three major gifts I received from you.

First, I'm told I'm a clear thinker and writer. This skill has been particularly beneficial, since in my work at an educational non-profit, our funding comes from writing successful proposals for grants and contracts, and from delivering clear reports and products. I know that I owe a large part of that skill to the discipline of organizing writing for your class. I can remember even now that the "essays" on our comprehensive final were not even written out; you only required the detailed outlines, prepared in-class. What a tremendous discipline that was!

Second, you sparked in me a life-long enjoyment of Shakespeare. I have often recited for my children speeches memorized in your class as we have prepared to watch a play together. I think of you every summer when we attend the outdoor Shakespeare "free-for-all" here in Washington.

Yet I think the greatest gift you gave me was an appreciation for Christian faith expressed in English literature. You challenged us to think of the spiritual dimensions of life in the literature we studied. You introduced me, as a young believer, to John Donne's holy sonnets. How often have I wished, in my own deepening walk with Christ, that the words of his 14th sonnet, first explained to me by you, would express my own deepest longings: "Take me to You, imprison me, for I, except You enthrall me, never shall be free, nor ever chaste, except You ravish me." And I think of you every Christmas as we read Eliot's Journey of the Magi, which you first opened up for me. Finally, as I serve as an elder in a Presbyterian church, I remember the example of your service in the little Anglican church in Lugano, reading Scripture or the homily.

My life has been blessed by you, Mr. Page, by word and example. My silence these many years is no reflection of how often I've thought of you with gratitude. May you be encouraged as you begin your retirement by the legacy you have built.

And now I trust that you and your wife will find rich blessings in your retirement. Sincerely,

Dorry M. Kenyon [dmkenyon@earthlink.net]

ROUBIK AFTANDILIANS

[In a preface to his tribute, Roubik asked the editor to pass along his best wishes and also let Mr Page "know that my twelve-year-old daughter, Natasha, won her school's Spelling Bee Championship last week."]

Is this a dagger which I see before me, The handle towards my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.

After thirty years these words are still in my memory, and Mr. Page's face in my mind. It was a pleasure and an honor to be in Mr. Page's classroom.

As an Iranian Armenian student I came to TASIS Lugano from England in September of 1973. The English class that I had with Mr. Page was the most difficult as well as the most memorable one. I remember the mixed feelings of anxiety and excitement before each class. Anxiety with respect to the subject and excitement about being in a classroom with Mr. Page.

I had a tremendous respect for my teacher. I learned from Mr. Page the value of having passion for a subject and the seriousness with which one should approach challenges in academics as well as life.

I graduated from TASIS Lugano in 1974 and went on to receive a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from Syracuse University in 1979, and, in 1981, a Master's degree in Architecture and Urban Design from Harvard University.

Throughout my academic life English literature was never my strongest subject; however, the lessons learned from my English teacher at TASIS are still with me to this day. I thank Mr. Page for this.

Roubík Aftandílíans 1342 Doverwood Drive Glendale, CA 91207 [RoubíkA@aol.com]

1975

MARTHA FREUND BRADSHAW

My writing may not be up to Mr. Page's standards, but I'm certainly not going to let that stop me from sending a message. So, here goes!

Maxwell Peter Page was a new concept of English teacher for a girl straight out of eleven years of Texas public schools. Our small class of six or seven students also included Jon Goerner, who would carry on conversations with Mr. Page that most of us could barely follow. However, just being exposed to the literature of Mr. Page's choice, and the caliber of students in my class, made us all much more aware of English as an art form rather than just a language.

I don't remember King Lear as much as some of the poems we memorized. John Milton's Paradise Lost comes to mind immediately. The memories are so tangled together though, I have to mention that my exposure to new things that year was no more than Mr. Page's. He became a father, and a very proud one at that. I still remember his confounded delight.

It's true that we were expected to work very hard, which I had never done. That experience alone taught me a great deal, and probably prepared me more for college than the actual English

lessons we were learning. Once you know you can study and accomplish something, you're much more likely to do it again. I'm currently enjoying discussions and readings at our church of Dante's INFERNO, which is somewhat due to my "early" exposure to this type of discussion.

So, I remember him well, I wish him all the best in his retirement, and I would especially like to thank him for not dismissing us heathens who knew basically nothing!

Thank you Mr. Page, and God bless you.

Martha Freund Bradshaw 3802 Bonnell Drive Austin, Texas 78731 [mandmbradshaw@earthlink.net]

HOPE STEVENS

Dear Max,

Congratulations! TASIS and generations of graduates are certainly richer because of your passionate instruction! I had dinner with one last night, in fact, and she too will be writing you at some point.

As a colleague rather than student, our paths crossed in different ways. Although not chough older than me to justify it, you seemed fierce, determined, absolutely positive of what you said. There was a dignity and a remoteness that seemed to hold me at bay. There were also illuminations into your soul: your love of rainy days, your passion for gardening, the huge soft spots for your children and Marcia. And then one day a book arrived, Anchor and Hope. I read it avidly. I wanted to know why you gave that to us. I found regular life, people with passions, social history and insight into part of England. And so, I recognized that your intentions were generous, that you were willing to let go of a little remoteness. I enjoyed our conversations much more than that.

What I really learned was more about myself. And that is why I think you have been a great teacher! Thanks for the lessons.

Enjoy your days non-structured by lessons, adolescents and corrections! I can't imagine that you won't become passionately involved in many other things with this new "freedom." And, whatever it is, it will be improved by your involvement.

I hope there is a real BASH in your honor! Imagine if all your students and former colleagues could arrive on the scene. What delicious chaos!

Fondly,

Hope Stevens TASIS 1975-1979 TASIS England 1979-1982 6300 SW Nícol Road Portland, OR 97223 [stevensh@oes.edu]

1976

ALISON ANDREWS VOGEL

Dear Mr. Page,

And the good fortune to be a student in the last AP English class you taught at TASIS in Switzerland in the year 1976. We were an undistinguished class, so much so that you chose not to award a literature prize that year, there being no clear candidate to receive it. I remember feeling intimidated by your abrupt style, and unworthy to be sitting in a classroom so lately occupied by such brilliant students as Larissa Shmailo and Jon Goerner. I also remember being fascinated by the breadth and depth of your knowledge, the clarity of your intellect, and your passion for truth. You were a fearless and unsentimental Christian, the likes of which I had never encountered. All those pearls you cast before us, undervalued at the time, were somehow taken in to be treasured in our hearts long after the AP test (note our progress from swine to willing God bearers). Thank you for bearing with us, trusting in the hidden process by which gifted teachers sow seeds that sometimes take years to germinate and flower.

While I followed a science and engineering path in college, graduate school, and early career, it was usually my writing skills and ability to communicate which earned any distinction. Now a stay-at-home mother of three, my few forays into the adult world involve writing articles for journals, meditations, and the odd letter to the editor. Certainly the seeds you planted have borne fruit in my work and community life. But it is in my spiritual life that the sweetest fruits

have come, and so 1 thank you for the witness to intellectually rigorous Christianity we were given, in you and in many of the texts we studied.

My oldest daughter is a high school sophomore taking Honors English (she fumes that it isn't an honor, because anyone can get in), who feels frustrated that she is not being challenged to improve. I regale her with stories of my experience in your class. How she longs to have a teacher able and caring enough to correct her! And so, in a small way, the fruits begin to scatter yet more seeds, at least in the form of a desire for excellence.

And so, with much gratitude for your service as teacher, model, and sower of seeds, I wish you and your wife a restful yet rich retirement, full of health and hope. God bless you!

Sincerely yours,

Alison Andrews Vogel [alisonv@attbi.com]



John Dryden speaks of 'that kind of poetry which excites to virtue the greatest of men' as being 'of the greatest use to human kind'. Poetry, he says, 'must resemble natural truth, but it must be ethical'. Dryden... regarded himself as in the role of public orator, 'armed with the power of verse'; as being one who is skilled in what Quintilian describes as 'ars bene dicendi', the art of speaking well in a moral as well as a technical sense.

- K.G. Hamilton, The Two Harmonies (Oxford, 1963), 128-9





Mary Hart, Max Page, Betty Dessants, Mrs Fleming, Steve Dessants

DAVID A. CHANDLER THE ROOKIE

I never had Max Page as a teacher, not officially, at any rate. He was my Department Chairman during my first year as a teacher. This was also TASIS England's first year of operation. I was one of those afterthought teachers, hired when Ken Blessing and Bob Bruno realized they had more students than anticipated.

The first year in a school is exhilarating and exhausting all at once. Teaching was, for me, extremely satisfying. We faced a lot of challenges and blazed a lot of trails. The school itself was exceeding all expectations. Personally, I was enjoying great popularity. As a first year team, we were a mix of maturity and young energy. I was part of the young energy. Max, of course, was part of the maturity.

As a part-time boarding teacher, which is an oxymoron, I taught four classes in the first semester. In the second semester, I increased my teaching load to six classes. My one free period coincided with one of Max's senior English classes. At Max's invitation, I sat in on this senior English class for the entire second semester.

These next emotions are hard to express. Walking into Max Page's class for the first time, I should have been cocky, confident and cavalier. Nope. I was petrified. Max had an air about him that spoke volumes. You knew what was expected simply from the way he carried himself. He walked in, ramrod straight, three-piece suit, floppy hair. He was Ichabod Crane from Oxford. His first very formal words of greeting only verified what we all already knew -- and I wasn't even required to carry the workload. In essence, he would accept nothing but the very best from each of us.

Curiously, not everyone reacted as I did - with mute, quivering fear. Some responded with complete devotion. Others feigned disdain. Still others were confused. However, almost all, in their own way, committed their every last fiber to giving Max the very best they had. I always found this curious. As a teacher who was learning his craft, this was the magical mystery. How to be different things to different students, and still inspire that same unmistakable drive for excellence. Max had it, and communicated it 360 degrees. This was his magic, and it became my goal. I was going to teach with my style, and in my way. But I wanted his results.

My rookie year was an interesting time. Students, teachers and administrators alike remain vivid in my fading memory. We had wonderful adventures. But in the midst of this organized chaos was Max Page. He was a living pillar representing a key part of the TASIS experience. He was the irrepressible focus for learning and excellence. He didn't require you to copy him. He only required your personal best in the academic realm, in what ever way you chose to express it -- which is so much harder. Max was and is an inspiration. Max Page was and is TASIS.

I offer my thanks to you.

David A. Chandler English Teacher, TASIS England, 1976-78 English Teacher/Administrator, TASIS Hellenic, 1979-82 [davidc4c@sover.net]

1977

ANDREA (ANDY) HALL

I was one of the microscopic, first graduating class of 77 at TASIS England. I recollect a variety of realizations from my year at Coldharbour Lane. The most comical was the fact that men really do have a different perception of rhythm, as evidenced at our graduation practice where they were asked to walk to the tempo of a piece of music whose beat was significantly less rapid than the gait normally used to get to the basement. Proved a little tricky...

And as for Mr. Page...! I went home after my first exposure to this extraordinary man and announced to my mother that Magnus Pike had either an exact double, or at the very least, stiff competition. I think that we all know his talent as a raconteur, and his ability to make his subject alive in the minds of his students. You will, no doubt, get a small car's weight in paper from a lifetime of grateful students on his great love of literature, and his passionate talent in sharing it. One is rarely found with the other in such an all-absorbing person...

1, however, remember him equally for something else. There were two things that he said (with the obligatory enthusiasm) to our class that were met with a numb, dumb, stunned silence. They were as follows:

- "People don't need to bathe regularly. The reason we all have greasy hair and body odor is that we don't allow our bodies time to create their own oils, balances, levels and rhythms that would allow them to clean themselves." And,
- 2. "The world is flat. The only reason everybody thinks that it's round is because all of our instruments are designed to see it that way."

I spent years afterwards thinking he was completely mad, until I realized that he was just "madly" trying to get us to "think completely."

He taught me to listen differently and I thank him for that. He should be proud of all that he has given to so, so many.

[Andy added that she also had the good fortune to study Art History with Marcia Page, and, since she lives locally, she asked that her telephone number be passed along to the Pages so that they might call on her if ever they needed "any help with anything."]

(Doc, ... thanks for the chance to say "thanks"...)

Andrea (Andy) Hall [andreahall@compuserve.com]

1979

ANDY BARTELS

[When submitting this, Andy apologized to the editor for its length and urged him to reduce it as he thought fit. The editor thought fit not to remove a word. Andy accompanied this tribute with a generous donation to the Master Teacher Award for Max Page.]

FIne weather was sultry. All the gardens visible from our AP English room drowsed in the heat. Some of us drowsed in our red leather high-backed chairs, as aware of Mr. Page's lecture on Cyrano de Bergerac as were the brass buttons adorning our seats. Unlike some of his lectures, for this one he had not stood on his chair, thrusting downwards with his long hands, his gangly frame pumping up and down at the knees, elbows, ankles, shoulders. On this day he was striding slowly up and down beside the windows, ignoring the view, seeming to ignore us. He spoke to the floor, intent on Christian and Cyrano, their painful love for one another and for Roxanne. He'd unbuttoned his vest, showing a tie knotted unevenly so the broad half was only a few inches long and the skinny bit flowing down past his belt. He'd dug his fingers into his vest pockets. He spoke softly, but in the rolling cant of a high-church cleric.

Somebody yawnedjust a little too loud. Mr. Page stopped. He turned towards us, rocking onto the balls of his feet, his lank black hair falling over one eye. "You think this has no importance, this old story. But you're wrong, and you're too young and too soft to know you're wrong. Someday you'll be without money, the window will be broken, cold wind and rain will be coming in, you'll be cradling your baby who is sick and crying and it's cold and you have no money for medicine and no money for heat, and you'll be lost." He cradled a baby in his arms, his grief filled the room. "You'll be lost so terribly you cannot begin to understand it now. You'll

be lost, unless you have this story. Then you'll remember Cyrano, his curse of a face, his loves, his white plume, his panache. And perhaps you'll find a way to save that baby, to save yourself." He regarded us silently, black hair hanging over an obsidian eye. He offered any of us who thought the lesson a waste of our valuable time the chance to leave.

I've been in that high-backed, red leather chair ever since. Mr. Page told me once I was "becoming a discriminating user of words." The fact that I was "becoming" has been of the greatest importance to me. It has meant I could pick up a pen (or keyboard), and try to become a bit better with words in the name of a good cause. "Becoming" has encouraged me to try writing a grant establishing a two-county program using proven methods to keep "at risk" youth off drugs and away from criminal activity. It has encouraged me to try writing a grant setting up a crisis line for teens staffed by teens who have received extensive training and mentoring. It has encouraged me to try writing a grant to bring professional folklorists to our state to research and present the work of folk artists who have since been recognized as "national treasures." It has encouraged me to write a grant setting up conferences where "at risk" youth can speak as equals directly to counselors, prospective employers and educators who have the information and tools to help these young people turn their lives around. One of these students now has a college degree and a family. Another successfully negotiated with the courts to let him serve his time in school and in the National Guard. I have gotten credit for these adventures with using words. Mr. Page should get credit too.

When I've tried to express my love for my wife, when our 12-year-old adopted son succumbed to crippling mental illness, when our daughter had awful colic as a new-born and my wife was so exhausted from giving birth that it fell to me to comfort that tiny child whose pain I could not relieve, I have held on to Cyrano's arm. As a professional storyteller faced with a family in mourning for a son who'd committed suicide, with a thousand elementary school students who love to write, with a congregation covenanting with their new minister, with a labor union wanting their anger given a voice, I've tried using words in a way that bring out the meaning in life's wrenching as much as in its beautiful moments. Staying in that red leather chair for me means trying to write to life's standards.

With a score of hats impaled on his sword, with Christian and Roxanne as his friends and loves, Cyrano has repeatedly urged me to take up my life's challenges through words. He

has tempered me, lifted me up, perhaps even made me "become" who I needed to be in order to walk arm in arm with my life's challenges, opportunities, glories. For me, the walk since I graduated from TASIS twenty-four years ago has always involved writing and speaking. Sometimes, especially when teaching religious history to a group, I'll stand up on my chair, clothes askew, knees bent, elbows out, hands gesticulating down. It's so important to me that my students listen. Mr. Page is talking.

Andy Bartels
[bartelspurcell@cco.net]



Max Page, Malcolm Muggeridge, Mrs Fleming and Peter Stevens

ANNIKA TURITZ

Dear Mr. Page,

doubt, the hours spent together with you greatly influenced my life and the person I became. I can still distinctly remember the atmosphere in your classroom; I can hear your voice; I can remember working hard, pushing myself to do my very best. As a young student and insecure girl from Sweden I was overwhelmed by how much you gave to us. You were not just teaching literature and writing skills: you opened new and exciting doors. By sharing your life experience you widened my perspective and encouraged a new dimension of critical thinking.

It was you who helped me start building my self-confidence. In your class I learned that within myself I had the capability to overcome difficulties. You never accept work that was any less than at the very top of your students' individual capacity. With a secure self-confidence it is so much easier to meet demanding challenges in life. I feel I owe you a big thank you for forcing me to test limits and do things I was afraid of and never thought I would master. In your class I learned that problems were to be solved, that one should not to expect easy solutions, and that there are no excuses for not tackling a task just because it requires strenuous effort, imagination, determination and self-control.

The accepted and expected common goal for the students in your AP English class was clear: Do well on the AP exam, get into a good college and finally get an interesting, well-paying job. I did all those things. I graduated CUM LAUDE from Middlebury College with a double major in English and German. I received my MBA while working my way up in an airline company. I became the Managing Director of an international airport catering company by the time I was 30 years old. Heading a company was a big responsibility, a lonely job but also a fantastic learning experience. The question, however, became more and more clear: Was this what I wanted out of life?

Seven years ago my husband and I started looking for a hotel of our own to operate. Of course we had our doubts, but on the other hand we were confident that we would pull this through. During this period I often thought of you, Mr. Page. Bits and pieces of your thoughts of happiness and doing what is right for oneself came to my mind more than once.

We now have a beautiful, thriving hotel business and a happy fulfilled life. When I reflect on the intriguing concept of risk, I laugh a little, think of you, and read my notes in the margin of T.S. Eliot's "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock"!

You taught me to write well, to be analytical, to be able to express my thoughts clearly. As you notice, I am a little out of practice. The ability to make sound judgment, on the other hand, is an important part of everyday hotel operation and I certainly hope I use it. You made me discover literature. The skill of reading with an open mind is something I develop and get better at every day. My books give me great joy. I know my interest in literature started in your AP English class. What I did not know twenty-four years ago, but what I do understand now, is that you taught me a lot about life. It was you who taught me the importance of common sense!

Kindest regards,

Annika Turitz Götgången 64 271 44 Ystad Sweden [info@hotelcontinental-ystad.se]

TYLE RIGG

[Lyle was headmaster at TASIS England from 1984 to 1998, and is now headmaster at Pennington School in New Jersey.]

get Ithough it is difficult for me to believe that I have been away from TASIS for almost five years now, it is even more difficult for me to believe that my close colleague, Max Page, is retiring at the conclusion of this academic year. Fortunately, during all of my seventeen years at TASIS England, I had the pleasure and privilege of working with Max. A few months after leaving England and coming to The Pennington School in New Jersey, I wrote a recommendation for Max. Although this recommendation was written several years ago, I think that it still captures the reasons why so many alumni and former teachers/administrators refer to Max as "Mr. TASIS." Excerpts from my recommendation follow:

During the seventeen years that Max and I worked together in England, Max served as Dean of Faculty, Head of the English Department, and teacher of English and Latin. Max performed all these roles conscientiously, capably, and with great care. Although Max did not always agree with decisions made by various administrative groups, he always supported them publicly. Max's challenges" to various proposals usually ensured that our administrative team considered different viewpoints and frequently resulted in wiser decisions. In short, Max made our administrative team stronger by ensuring that we consider all aspects of an issue particularly the human aspect (i.e., How might our decision affect adversely teachers, staff, parents, and students?)

Although Max was often viewed as one of the school's toughest teachers, he also was the Upper School teacher who was most highly regarded by his former students and who was most requested by parents. Whenever alumni returned to campus, they always sought out Mr. Page to let him know how well he had prepared them for college and to thank him. Most of the students in Max's advanced placement English classes scored "4" or "5" (the top grades) on the year-end AP Examination. Because Max believed that students needed to start their study of English on a strong note, he also taught English to many of the school's ninth-grade students. If his schedule permitted, Max also taught Latin.

Max's accomplishments as Dean of Faculty were, perhaps, among his most important. Although this role never seemed to have a clearly defined job description, Max found numerous ways to make the position fit the school's changing needs throughout the years. Max supported many teachers both personally and professionally. Max also helped to form and to lead the school's Faculty Salary/Benefits Committee - a committee that achieved many successes. In addition to improved salaries and benefits, the committee also secured more time and money for professional development. Max also helped to develop evaluation instruments for both teachers and administrators.

Through his words (both written and spoken) Max frequently inspired the members of the TASIS community. I always looked forward to the occasions when Max would address various TASIS constituencies. I also can recall many occasions when Max "saved the day" by saying just the right thing at just the right time.

After working with Max for seventeen years, it seems strange to be in a situation where I do not have the benefit of his sound advice. TASIS has been very fortunate to have the services of a man as dedicated, loyal and talented as Max. I also was fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with him for so many years.

The above excerpts from my recommendation just begin to touch upon the many reasons why Max was such a valued colleague and friend. If it had not been for Max, I am certain that I would never have "survived" for fourteen years as Headmaster of TASIS England!

Max, I look forward to congratulating and thanking you in person in the coming months.

With very best wishes,

Lyle Rígg TASIS England 1979-1982 TASIS Switzerland 1982-1984 TASIS England 1984-1998



Max Page, Mrs Fleming, Lyle Rigg, and Akbar Khan at Great Fosters

SHARON CREECH RIGG

[Sharon served with great distinction as a teacher of English at TASIS England and TASIS Switzerland and has since become a best-selling and award-winning author.]

Dear, dear Max:

Although I hope that you already know much of what I am about to say, I would like to take this opportunity to add to the tributes which will be showered on you this year, as you prepare to leave the school to which you have not only devoted so much of your life, but also which you, in large part, shaped.

It was my great honor and privilege to work with you for so many years. You are the ultimate Master Teacher, from whom I learned so much about teaching, students, education, literature, life and integrity. Although our teaching styles were different, it is a testimony to your skill that my style could thrive alongside yours. I appreciated that you always kept the "bar" high, and that you remained the voice of reason and stability and integrity amid the chaos that is this unusual school, that we both have loved so much.

I have valued your knowledge, your honesty, your wit, your compassion. Lyle and I will always look fondly on our time with you and Marcia, and we are both grateful for the chance to know you both and to call you our friends.

We have much to thank you for, Max. We send you love and all good wishes as you take leave of this school which has Max Page built into its very walls.

Yours, with admiration,

Sharon Creech Rigg TASIS England 1979-1982 TASIS Switzerland 1982-1984 TASIS England 1984-1998 [SRigg37889@aol.com]



Lear: "O ho, are you there with me? No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light; yet you see how this world goes."

Gloucester: "I see it feelingly."
- Shakespeare, King Lear, IV, 5



DAVID JEPSON

[The following was written in 1999 for an earlier collection of tributes from Mr. Page's colleagues at TASIS England.]

Max Page's relationship with TASIS England teachers has been more intense, passionate, and important than one would expect from a "normal" professional relationship. He has been like a father to us all, and to me, personally, since I arrived at TASIS in 1979. My thoughts and scelings about him are like those for a parent: complex, overwhelming, and far too deep for words. Max has seemed to me to embody or personify the TASIS community, which has been our special context and calling over the years. Often I have felt as if we were working together, and have felt like saying with Cordelia, "O dear father, it is thy business that I go about." Other times the sense of common endeavour has been more strained. But overall Max has been there like a rock, and I have felt like saying with Aeneas to his father: "quo res cumque cadent, unum et commune periculum, una salus ambobus erit." ("Whatever chances may await us, one common peril and one salvation shall be ours.") That will not be exactly true anymore. The thought of Max not being with us to listen to our stories, inquire after our welfare, help with our problems, and even chide us for our foolishness leaves a sense of emptiness, a great void. There will never be anyone like him. As I watch with some alarm as the landscape changes around us, I think of Max and can only murmur with Stephen Daedalus, "Old father, old artificer stand me now and ever in good stead."

> David Jepson TASIS England, 1979 to present

1980

BYRON CROZIER

[The following was written in 1999 for an earlier collection of tributes from Mr. Page's colleagues at TASIS England.]

What I will remember most about Max is his genuine concern for the welfare of the faculty. Life at TASIS is hard enough, and much is expected, but he always spoke out about the faculty's overall quality of life here. I will also remember Max as a man who possesses a great deal of personal integrity; a person's character matters to Max, setting high standards for himself and for others. Finally, I will recall Max as a lover of nature. His garden reflects many qualities of the man who tends it: colourful, well-manicured and organized, with perennial bursts of life.

Byron Crozier TASIS Hellenic 1980-83 TASIS Cyprus 1983-4 TASIS England 1984 to 2003

KARL AND CAROLINE CHRISTIANSEN

[The following was written in 1999 for an earlier collection of tributes from Mr. Page's colleagues at TASIS England.]

We first met Max when we moved to England in 1987. When we arrived, he greeted us warmly and welcomed us graciously into the TASIS England community. In fact, he gave us a copy of the "Oxford Book of Short Poems" as a welcoming gift, a book we have thumbed through frequently since and a book which captures both his Englishness – he has made this infinitely plain – and his love of literature – he has made this, too, infinitely plain. Throughout the time we have worked with Max, we have been most impressed with his support and concern for us, as indeed for all faculty, as individuals, as sentient, living beings who deserve to have lives outside of work. He realizes, of course, that a large part of what makes TASIS the School it has been relies on the commitment and dedication of the faculty for the students and for the organization and for each other; however, he has always wisely insisted that our work be placed in perspective, that we pursue interests and take time for families and hobbies outside. In all settings, from his daily contact with people, to Governing Board meetings, to

his welcoming remarks at the Faculty Banquet, and to departmental meetings, he has insisted on the value of the faculty, on the irreplaceable gifts the teachers have bestowed on the School and on the students. He has opened his house (and garden!!!) to us. In doing so he represents the generosity of spirit which has been the hallmark of TASIS England.

Karl Christiansen TASIS Hellenic 1980-87 TASIS England 1987 to present Caroline Christiansen TASIS Hellenic 1983-87 TASIS England 1987 to present

1982

BETH HERZFELD

as a senior in the days when he was not exclusive to AP English. Although it has been well over 20 years, his skill, insight and dedication remain fresh in my mind and over the years, I have been able to use what he taught me both in my work and in my day-to-day life. While I was teaching British literature in China in the late-1980s, I drew inspiration (and material) from his lessons, exposing my students at Qinghua University to everything from Chaucer through Milton - though I have to confess that Paradise Lost was a bit too challenging for them - to 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'. He reinforced my love of poetry and since graduating from TASIS the collected works of John Donne and T.S. Eliot, two books he introduced me to, are among the possessions that accompany me wherever I have moved. And, in answer to the question he asked when I last saw him, writing is a central part of my work.

Mr Page, it is an honour and pleasure to have been one of your students What you have given me will never be forgotten. You provided me with real challenges that gave me a muchneeded sense of accomplishment. You have influenced how I see the world.

I hope that you enjoy your retirement and have time to indulge your many passions.

Beth Herzfeld [b.herzfeld@antislavery.org]

KRIS SEYMOUR

[Kris proudly described herself as "winner of Excellence in English Award 1982 and rebel in general." Kris accompanied this tribute with a generous donation to the Master Teacher Award for Max Page.]

Mr. Page was my AP English teacher in 1981-82. It's always the toughest ones that you remember; the cream puff teachers become lost among the jumbled memories of youth. I recently watched a show on the Trojan Wars and found myself reciting, "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships and burnt the topless towers of Ilium?" (DOCTOR FAUSTUS, Christopher Marlowe). I can't believe I still remember it after 20 years... Milton, Tennyson, Heaney, "Prufrock."

I now have my own children who are starting school, and I realize how touched I was by Mr. Page. I dream for a teacher who will bring out the special spark in my boys. I want to find a teacher who puts magic into their life, who makes them love to work, who makes them strive to be better. But the reality is that magic doesn't happen often. When it comes along, it must be celebrated. And so I honor Mr. Page for his extraordinary care, dedication and enthusiasm given to all of us fortunate enough to be in his class. He was a true role model with the rare gift of magic.

Kristen Jackson Seymour [jkseymour@ameritech.net]

1983

MARNIE MOORE DE KONING

[Marnie prefaced her contribution by commenting that it was "a lot easier to do than the 5000-word essays we had in AP English!!!."]

A came to board at TASIS in my Senior year (1982-83) - a naive, public school girl from Florida. Mr Page was one of the first teachers I met as he had been assigned as my mentor. To be honest, he scared me so much with his classic English demeanor and high expectations, that I immediately changed mentors to a much less formidable teacher (a huge mistake I realize now!). I then discovered he would also be my AP English teacher. This thought was even more scary. In our first week we started reading The Canterbury Tales and were assigned

a 5000-word essay. I had never had homework of this magnitude or difficulty in Florida and I found it all very daunting. Mr. Page's patient yet direct feedback was invaluable in teaching me how to construct a reasonable, fact-based argument. This is a skill I have been able to use effectively throughout my business career.

Mr. Page's curriculum was second to none. We covered a fantastic breadth of literature through the ages from The Canterbury Tales and King Lear to The Great Gatsby and Death of a Salesman. I came a long way, in those 9 months, in my understanding of English Literature and I have continued to gain pleasure from reading the classics in the years that followed. We all particularly enjoyed Mr. Page's theatrics in the classroom. I can still see Mr. Page doing the famous "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage! Blow!" speech from King Lear. He could have been on the stage.

Although Mr. Page was a tough and demanding teacher, as I got to know him better I also came to appreciate his classic English dry sense of humor as well as his ability to treat his students as sensible young adults entitled to their own opinions. I also managed, under his tutelage, to achieve a "3" on my AP Exam - exempting me from Freshman English - which was a nice bonus!

I last saw Mr Page in 2001 at the TASIS graduation ceremony. He had not changed a bit and, although it took him awhile to recognize me from amongst his more than 2000 former students, he was as charming and funny as ever. I wish him all the best in his retirement, but I am sad for all the future TASIS students who will not be able to see him perform as King Lear or Willy Loman!

Marnie Moore de Koning [marnie.dekoning@12move.nl]

KAREN (BYE) STASSI

My family moved around a lot and I used to comment that I had attended nine schools in nine years (TASIS England was my eighth). Obviously in all of those moves I was taught by a wider range of teachers than most. Yet in all of those years, Mr. Page has consistently risen to the top of the list. I think what made him the best went beyond his obvious knowledge and experience. Even after years of teaching, he still seemed to relish his topic and went to extraordinary lengths to impart that passion to his students. When I went into his class I already loved to read, but he

managed to make choosing a new book an even more exciting prospect. To this day I still jot exclamation marks in the margins when something surprises me. Mr. Page was also notable for being a demanding, but fair teacher, and if he approved of something I had said or written, I was confident that it was pretty good. When I think of Mr. Page, I always visualize him reciting Chaucer in Middle English. He must have done it hundreds of times and encountered many a blank stare from a dazed teenager, yet that apparently never diminished the pleasure it gave him. He was and is an inspiration to me. Thank you Mr. Page.

Karen (Bye) Stassi Prairieville, Louisiana [kstassi3@eatel.net]

DAVID WEST

[The following was written in 1999 for an earlier collection of tributes from Mr. Page's colleagues at TASIS England.]

A always think of Max as the conscience of the school, the one person in our organization who seems to have an ever-present vision of what TASIS is (or is supposed to be) uppermost in his mind. While the rest of us are laboring away, preoccupied with the seemingly endless tasks of a teacher's commitment here at school, certainly oblivious to the forest because we're hopelessly lost in the trees, Max always knows who we are, why we're here and what we represent. Even more important than that, he is determined not to let us, or anyone else, forget it. He has never been afraid to articulate the philosophy and ideals of TASIS and to interpret in very specific ways how those apply to faculty and students. He has stood up for what he feels is just and right and has spoken out unfalteringly in support of faculty. When, at times, many have gotten caught up in the endless minutiae of administration, Max has reminded us that the quality and reputation of the institution rest solidly on what happens in the classroom. His own unquestioned excellence as a teacher and his obvious love for his subject have served to reflect for us where the real importance of this school lies.

A TASIS without Max is going to be a weaker, less honest and certainly less focused institution. Yes, schedules will get done, keys will be lost and found, calendars will be made and the school will function. But who is going to lift our heads above the trees and speak out to remind us of who we are and what it is we are really doing here?

David West TASIS England, 1983 to present

1984

KIM BETTS

[The following, though slightly revised for the present compilation, was written in 1999 for an earlier collection of tributes from Mr. Page's colleagues at TASIS England.]

MAX PAGE * THE PERFECT ENGLISH GENTLEMAN

There is the claim that none of us is irreplaceable; but I think in the case of Max Page, this just is not true!

Quite apart from the stability and high standards you have given the TASIS English Department all these years, probably your greatest gift and worth to the School has been your function as Dean of Faculty. Now this position could be seen by some as a luxury TASIS could survive without, and the title given to a less scrupulous person could have been a waste of TASIS resources; but in the person of Max Page, the Dean of Faculty was the link between the Directors and the Faculty, instilling in us a sense of concern and value for our personal lives and for our work. You have been an invaluable resource and a great service to the TASIS organization. Providing the conduit through which issues of the Faculty could be represented to the Directors, particularly in your position as Chairman of the Faculty Benefits Committee, you were always concerned with what was needed by the School in the best interests of the students and Faculty.

As a teacher of high school English with high expectations, you challenged the students to think deeply, for only through hard work and deep thought can one be rewarded with understanding and be able to produce one's most coherent and persuasive writing.

And the opening Faculty Banquet in late August will never be the same without your address, full of words of wisdom, advice and inspiration done with such an English wit and sense of humor.

Yes, your worth can be summed up as having kept TASIS standards high and for being a sympathetic ear to those who approached you for your counsel - someone who presented himself as a true professional yet could share his hopes, fears, views and aspirations for TASIS with his colleagues.

Max, you are one of those people who cannot be replaced, certainly not in terms of the service you provided for those of us lucky enough to know you as a real English gentleman in an era passing.

God Bless You, Max! Sincerely and thankfully,

> Kim Betts and Family TASIS England, 1984 to present

JAMES LANDER

[The following was written in 1999 for an earlier collection of tributes from Mr. Page's colleagues at TASIS England.]

Dear Max,

And late in writing these words of appreciation to add to the collection, and my excuse is that my sabbatical absence prevented my hearing about it. I have no such good excuses when it comes to explaining why I was so late in appreciating you in the first place, in my first years at TASIS England, in my days as a department chairman. With typical charity and sagacity, you may have ascribed my excesses of that time to my youth or lack of experience; or you may have seen deeper and detected my hubris. I have ever since lacked the courage to express my gratitude for your tolerance, so I say it now; thank you.

It took time to understand the values you were trying to uphold. However, with the passing years 1 have come to appreciate the difficulty of keeping the rudder steady in the changing winds of educational fashions. But it is not for me to lecture you on your standards. I prefer to tell you something no teacher can ever know for certain: the value of the gift you have offered to your students. No student or parent can convey the message as reliably as a colleague who knows the system, knows the pressures and the obstacles, and knows the students. On that basis, I can tell you that you have had a wide and profound influence on your pupils. Your example of scholarship and friendship has touched them deeply. I recently heard an educator on the radio who had a fine slogan: "I'm not here to fill buckets, but to light fires." There, I think, is an ideal which some teachers, unfortunately, cannot quite grasp; others of us can only hope to aspire towards it. You, however, have lighted such fires in a thousand brains. Those fine youths are

now finer adults because of your influence. Perhaps some are themselves teachers now, paying you that highest compliment: imitation.

Thank you for your example. And keep lighting fires. Sincerely,

> James Lander TASIS England, 1984 to present



There is only the fight to recover what has been lost And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions

That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.

For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.

- T.S. Eliot, East Coker (1940), V

1986

TINA BOSTICK

[Tina was Senior Class President in 1986.]

As an American attending my freshman year of high school in a foreign country, many things made quite an impression on me. However, one of my fondest memories of my time spent at TASIS was my freshman English class, and its wonderful professor, Mr. Page.

On my first day attending Mr. Page's class, I remember being awestruck by this amazing English voice, a voice that made Shakespeare come even more alive as he read to the class by the pond. Later in my senior year, I was again blessed to have Mr. Page as professor of my AP English class. While I had always been a good student and strived to do well, Mr. Page gave me something that other teachers had not been able to do - he taught me to truly enjoy literature.

Beyond giving me a unique appreciation for the written word, Mr. Page instilled in me something even more special, a sense of self-confidence. On a particularly difficult day in my sophomore year, I recall Mr. Page's words of encouragement: "I would place my bets on you any day." Those words still stick with me to this very day. Even after all these years, my respect for Mr. Page remains undiminished.

As Mr. Page prepares for the peace and relaxation of retirement, my sincerest wish is that he knows what a difference he made in my life and the lives of my classmates. He will be forever treasured as a kind, caring, insightful and thoughtful teacher and counselor.

Christina Sorak (née Bostick) 5904 Auden Street Houston, TX 77005



Max Page & Nancy Bennett 1985

1987

10CELYN JUNKER HSU

Last week, I bundled my five-week-old daughter into her stroller and took off on a walk with my three-and-a-half-year-old son in tow. Just one block into the walk, I was thrilled to see a yellow-striped purple crocus flower. This flower has been the first to bloom in my Northern Virginia neighborhood each of the past three springs. It sits strangely on its own in the shadow of a huge old oak tree. Many people would overlook it, but to me that flower is the harbinger of warmer weather and the many colorful flowers that will brighten my world until next fall. I look forward to seeing that simple little flower and the excitement bubbles up inside of me like a brook overflowing with water from the melting snow.

I think this must be how Max Page feels each year when it is time for his students to read King Lear. Just as I cried out this week, "Look, Ethan — the first flower has bloomed!" so has Mr. Page, in a sense, cried out for the past 35 years, "Listen, students, to this incredible story, these powerful words!" And just as my son ran to the flower to smell it and wanted to pick it for me, so Mr. Page's students have embraced the story and reveled in his readings.

It is quite telling that in my little bookcase in my home office the only books from my high school career are King Lear, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and Down and Out in Paris and London — three books I read in Mr. Page's class — along with Siddhartha and my French book. Although I have to admit I've only thrown cursory glances at these books since my graduation, the fact that I have kept them in my small collection after many moves and many cleaning frenzies just goes to show what an impact those books (and their teachers) had on me.

Max Page indeed has a passion for literature that he has graciously shared with his many students over the years. I feel incredibly lucky to be among the students who were fortunate enough to sit with him around the old wooden tables in the salon at TASIS England. Thanks to Mr. Page's strong teaching, I scored a 5 on my AP English exam and landed in an Honors English class filled with seniors in my very first semester of college. After a few weeks of class, my professor was quite surprised when she learned that I was a freshman and told me that I had been very well prepared for her class.

Mr. Page, thank you for sharing your passion with me. You were a major force behind my lifelong appreciation of literature and my ability to analyze and discuss literary and many other issues. I wish you well in your retirement and feel confident that you will dust off your copy of King Lear with great anticipation each year, just as I'll always delight in the first spring flowers.

Jocelyn Junker Hsu
[Jocelyn_Hsu@sra.com]

DAVID SULLIVAN

[David attached this brief but sincere message to a generous donation to the Master Teacher Award for Max Page.]

A wanted to congratulate Max Page on his upcoming retirement and thank him for his years of teaching at TASIS. I have great memories of AP English at TASIS: sitting in the classroom overlooking the lawn and learning from Max is something I will never forget. I will also never forget the results of his style: I owe my 5 on my AP exam to him! Best of luck and stay healthy!

1989

SONAL TEJANI SHAH

Max Page was an incredible English teacher. I remember him reciting T.S. Eliot's "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock":

the women come and go/talking of Michelangelo.

He really made Eliot come alive.

Another highlight was listening to him reading aloud from The Canterbury Tales, especially "The Wife of Bath." He gave us a physical demonstration of how she would have looked riding a horse! (large hips swaying from side to side!)

And finally, remember how he made us memorize portions of Shakespeare or other famous literary works for the AP exam? Who else could breathe such life into King Lear?

Sonal Tejani Shah

Ernst & Young LLP/International Tax Services

Boston

[Sonal.Shah@ey.com]

1990

SARAH K. CHALMERS

A kept hearing about Mr. Page's AP English class: how "hard" it was, how his favorite thing was reading Lear out loud, how he wore the same suit every day... I was in Mrs. Rigg's pre-AP class my junior year and my senior friends in Mr. Page's class would moan over their reading and writing assignments. For some reason, I had to take this class!

The first thing we were handed was an AP English practice test. The next day two or three of us were called in as a little group to find out we had scored a 2 or below. Mr. Page said that we were welcome to stay in his class, but we were not likely to score highly on the final. We were given until the next class to think this through.

I knew my academic skills were not exceptional, certainly not compared to the others in the class. I knew already that I was an actor, and I was not overly concerned with the grade so much as what I could learn. I wanted to study Shakespeare with Mr. Page. And even though, or perhaps because, I was scared of him, I presented myself at the next class.

None of my fellow low-scorers were in attendance. Mr. Page began class by addressing me. "So you've decided to stay?" he asked. I assented mutely, my cheeks burning with the embarrassment of feeling singled out as the dolt of the class. "We shall see..." he said ominously. I hated him that day.

I worked harder than I ever had. I had assignments done, even if I had to stay up half the night reading James Joyce and understanding half of it. On the day a reading was due, Mr. Page would look in our books to make sure we had made notes on every assigned page. Anyone who had not completed their reading was sent to the library and didn't get to work out with the group what it all meant. And I will always have a special love for Lear. Mr. Page took care over every word, every speech and scene. I learned how to read this language I now make my own on the stage.

I am currently in a production of Hamlet at the Cornell University Theatre Department where I teach acting and perform with the students. One of the students is also a former student of Mr. Page, Craig Divino. So here we are poring over one last writing assignment, sharing stories, and our mutual love for him.

I will never forget how much it meant to me that Mr. Page paced outside the room where we took the AP exam. I looked up and smiled at him as I realized the question fit perfectly for an essay about his beloved Lear. I think I earned a 3 in the end, a great accomplishment for me. But more than that, I learned that I could do it.

Thank you Mr. Page. Your lessons are still with me.

Sarah K. Chalmers
[SarahK792@aol.com]

KATHY HORNISH SCHULTHEIS

Dear Mr. Page,

& When I think back to my many years at TASIS, I have such fond memories of the amazing people that truly touched my life. You, Mr. Page, are one of those most wonderful people whom I will never forget.

Although I graduated 13 years ago, I can still vividly remember sitting in your AP English class, reading and discussing Cyrano de Bergerac, Frankenstein, and of course, King Lear. You were never an easy teacher, but it is not the easy teachers that have touched my life or pushed me to excellence. You were demanding, and yet I know that it was because you cared so deeply about each of your students, and wanted us to reach our potential. You taught us to examine the texts, to analyze the author's intentions, and to write thoughtful essays. You even taught me calligraphy!!

Although I was certainly influenced by many teachers during my almost ten years at TASIS, every time I recall that decade, you never fail to cross my mind. Thank you for your passion, your kind spirit, and your caring nature. May God continue to bless you!

Sincerely,

Kathy Hornish Schultheis 39 Winthrop Street Williston Park, NY 11596 [mkschultheis@worldnet.att.net]

1991

HOLLY BETH BILLINGTON

Sefore I came to TASIS England for my senior year of high school, I absolutely hated English. I always did my reading — though none of it was as interesting as PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN, THE BIRTHDAY PARTY OF KING LEAR. When I first received the summer reading list for AP English I nearly went apoplectic. My mother, a retired teacher and administrator for the Hartford Public School System, on the other hand, was so impressed that she brought the syllabus to my local high school to show the head of the English Department and the Chief Librarian just what their program was lacking and why exactly I decided to go abroad for my senior year.

Mother got all of the books and of course, on pain of death, I read them. And lo and behold -1 found out that I loved Shakespeare, and Marlow, and Joyce, and Pinter and so many others.

During my freshman year of college at Harvard, I took a class on the psychoanalysis of literary characters. I did my final project on Lear. That paper saved my grade and it is due in no small part to Mr. Page. Besides all of the wonderful classes we spent on King Lear, Mr. Page was also kind enough to help me with my valedictory address. Of course, I quoted Lear's prayer in the storm - and of course it got not just smiles, but cheers, from many of my AP English classmates. I still have a copy of that speech on my wall today. My senior year at TASIS was truly the best year of my life.

Years later, while a starving actor in Los Angeles, I joined a touring Shakespeare company called Kings & Clowns - not out of desperation (though paying rent was starting to get tricky), but because I loved the Bard (even though it paid a lot less than extra work on movie sets). Besides getting to play such wonderful characters as Ariel in The Tempest and Bianca in The Taming of the Shrew, I also got to play Lear himself in an avant-garde production in mask at the Stella Adler Theatre in Hollywood. By that time I'd seen the Olivier, Scofield and Holms versions, but all I could think of was Mr. Page. He had permitted me to read Goneril to his Lear in class. I only wish that someone had had enough forethought to tape the performance — I'm sure that not only the fact that my voice had dropped to that of a hoarse tenor (my singing teacher once told me that I sound like Bea Arthur with a cold), but that the director thought

fit to cast me, as opposed to any of the males in the cast (who were quite talented) because she felt that somehow I understood Lear better than any other. Six years and a lifetime later, Mr. Page's teachings had not left me - and never will. As Henry Adams once said: "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."

Best wishes on your retirement!

Holly Beth Billington [hbilling@law.harvard.edu]

SCHENLEY CHEN 1NTO THE TWILIGHT

"The magic of movie making enraptured me when I was a young man.

As I totter into antiquity, movie magic enraptures me still."

- Sir Peter O'Toole, Recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Academy Award, 2003.

At is those long, bony fingers that stretched through every corner of that stately Seminar Room in Thorpe Hall that I will remember him for. They curled into a fist and slammed ferociously on the wooden table in front of me. Gaining the students' attention through the dramatic maneuver, he would cry out in his stately "Oxbridge" accent, "This is the essence of the tragedy that would befall our fateful King Lear."

My memories of that AP English Class have faded over the twelve years that have passed since I left the TASIS England Campus. Nevertheless, it was an elderly British actor who would remind me of the mark that Mr. Page placed in my life. As Sir Peter O'Toole stood on stage at the Academy Awards Ceremony this year to accept his lifetime achievement award, he indirectly pointed out three things that helped define the role that Mr. Page had on TASIS society.

Overdue Recognition: Mr. Page has been a cornerstone of my high school education as well as the TASIS England curriculum as a whole. I realized this in the years after my graduation when I noticed that my writing and communication skills were called upon repeatedly in post-secondary education and life in general. Proper English writing and general literacy skills gained from the tutelage provided by Mr. Page proved to be just as useful as the lessons in mathematics and physical activities that I had acquired from my well-rounded TASIS education.

Providing Creative Outlets: I have always been grateful that TASIS has continuously emphasized student academic growth in the dramatic arts and humanities studies, as well as the scientific forum and the physical sporting arena. With the inspired teaching of Mr. Page, I developed interests in English creative writing and performing arts that persist with me to this day. Though I hope to perform well throughout my life in physical sporting interests as well as the continuing scientific and business activities of the day, I am certain that my interests in the arts will continue to be fulfilled until I pass from this earth.

Legacy: The tenure that Mr. Page has provided at TASIS has provided a fertile ground for future TASIS English teachers to follow and nurture student aspirations such as my own. The English, Humanities, and Performing Arts departments in TASIS are entrusted with developing the adolescent minds of students that pass through the halls of their school, and orienting them to the possibilities of artistic endeavor. With the path provided by Mr. Page's august teaching and career achievements, I am sure that this task will be fulfilled.

The retirement of my esteemed high school English teacher fills me with some regret. A fond era that has passed invariably reminds one of the mortality of men, the closing of a chapter where the stories are archived in written notebooks and spoken lessons are recorded forever on Dictaphone tape. Let us hope that the example and the effort set forth by Mr. Page are remembered much like a legacy provided by the King Lears and the Peter O'Tooles of the world. Let this remembrance be illustrated in the teachings in our unpretentious seminar room for future TASIS English classes to experience.

Schenley Chen [schenley@cyberannex.com]

DENNIS MELLANG

[The following was written in 1999 for an earlier collection of tributes from Mr. Page's colleagues at TASIS England.]

Max has been a TASIS teacher for years, but, more than that, he has been the embodiment of the TASIS teacher. He and TASIS have grown with each other. Among all of the transience and unpredictability of life at TASIS, Max has been a stalwart, always keeping constant and secure the philosophy of TASIS for both students and faculty. He has worked to hold the faculty

together in mind and heart, to remind us that we do have one mission and that we are, in a way, indeed a family. Max is a large part of the success of TASIS. He will not be replaceable.

Dennis Mellang TASIS England, 1991 to present



Scorn then to darken and contract
The landscape of the heart
By individual, arbitrary
And self-expressive art.
Let your speech be ordered wholly
By an intellectual love;
Elucidate the carnal maze
With clear light from above.
- James McAuley (1917-1976), An Art of Poetry

1992

ANAND TEJANI

Mr. Page has a rare ability to communicate his passion and knowledge of literature to a wider and younger audience. I still recall his phenomenal impressions of a medieval trumpet, a galloping horse, and his unforgettable rendition of King Lear where he simultaneously acted the parts of the aging king and his daughters. His teaching not only helped me to appreciate the specific texts but also fostered a more lasting interest for which I am grateful.

Anand Tejani Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst Limited 21 Grosvenor Place London SW1X 7HF [atejani@hmtf.com]

KATE NIEDZWIECKI WALSH

Just this past Sunday morning, I was sitting in my Manhattan apartment, holding a cup of coffee, reading the New York Times crossword puzzle. The clue for 98 across read "Lear's daughter," and with those two words I was transported back to Thorpe Place, where eleven years ago Mr. Page taught my AP English class to love the story of Cordelia and her father. It was the same classroom where we read Chaucer aloud (terribly), giggled at the bawdy humor of Goldsmith, and struggled through Joyce. Thinking about it now, I am astonished at how high a bar Mr. Page set for us, and at the passion and brilliance with which he made seventeen-year-olds care about those texts. Today I am a magazine editor, and - despite what I may have thought while unenthusiastically reading Henry James over summer vacation - what I learned in Mr. Page's class really has changed my life. I learned to edit from a master, a man who was both patient and resolute in showing students that their writing could always be more precise, more artful. (And though I'll always be a dreadful speller, there's one word I've never spelled wrongly since Mr. Page muttered over one of my essays, "Argu[e] ment spelled with an e... interesting.") The most important thing I learned in that Thorpe classroom is that while nothing will come of nothing, everything will come of a great and patient teacher. Thank you, Mr. Page, for making me a better reader, a better writer, and a better thinker. It has made all the difference.

Fondly,

Kate Niedzwiecki Walsh [katenwalsh@hotmail.com]

KAREN CRADDOCK

I'm sorry to hear that future students won't have the benefit of classes taught by Mr Page available to them. It is now a few years since I left school, but he stands out in my memories of Thorpe as a great teacher and wonderful character.

Karen Craddock 40 Emmbrook Road Wokingham Berkshire RG41 1HG [Craddock@golder.com]

CORINNA MCLEOD

Mr. Page was my AP English teacher back in 1991-1992. Since I first started hearing about him when I came to TASIS for my sophomore year, I'd wanted to be in his class. My sister, Jennifer, was one of his students, too—she and the other seniors (class of 1990) would say, "just you wait until YOU have Mr. Page." His class seemed like a rite of passage—would you get in? Could you stay in?

I'm now teaching at the college-level. This August I will graduate with my Ph.D. in English Literature and Postcolonial Theory and I find that a part of me has become Mr. Page. I have even been known to thunder at my students, "SOMETHING always comes of NOTHING!" a legendary Page-ism from studying King Lear. And my adoration for John Donne that started in the 12th grade rages on into my classrooms as I try to give students the gift of love for literature that Mr. Page gave to me. I try to bring literature to life, as he did. I remember one time when we were reading Doctor Faustus. We were in the seminar classroom sitting around the huge, wooden table (all of us being careful to listen and not flip through our notebook pages—a definite falix pas in Mr. Page's class). We had reached one of the parts where Faustus calls upon Mephistopheles, "Veni, Veni..." And we all knew never to pronounce the name of the demon in conjunction with the summons. But one day, Troy Fraske decided to flout the law. Suddenly clouds rolled across the sky, the room grew dim, and the wind blew against the windows. We all fell silent. "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE!" roared Mr. Page. We glared at our reflections in the table, and said that we did not know how to undo what had just been done. The power of literature is such that you know not what you may summon.

I think of that incident as transforming me from someone who liked to read to someone who has a deep belief in literature as a powerful force in our world. I will be going to teach at a university next fall where I will be an Assistant Professor of World Literature. I hope to make you proud, Mr. Page. I will do my best to continue to teach literature with the passion, the integrity, and the honesty with which you taught me.

Thank you, Mr. Page. Congratulations on your retirement, and wishing you the best,

Corinna McLeod

[Mcleodfren@aol.com]

1994

STACIE M. STEINBERGER

At is a grand goal to which I aspire in these brief words, to convey the influence Mr. Page has had upon the person I am and the life I have begun to lead.

And I would that my tongue could utter The thoughts that arise in me.

- Tennyson

In the splendid experience of my five years at TASIS England, it was a gift that I twice received to be in Mr. Page's English class. But that class title is much too limiting to be true. It was the education not only of a subject but of a lifetime.

And then the lighting of the lamps.

- Eliot

A ninth grade student treated as an adult regardless of my mere fourteen years of worldly experience, seated excitedly with my classmates around the grand table fit for its master. A twelfth grade student, anxious to be ready for the steps afar yet already fearful of what those would be.

But I hung on like death: Such waltzing was not easy. - Roethke

Mr. Page changed text into the art, the music that flowed within us. We learned the freedom in tradition through studying literature together, then venturing into the awe-filled book basement to select our own next treasures. We abandoned needless inhibition and read to our classmates with passion. We were given the tools to create our unique expression, words flowing into beautiful calligraphy before us.

To set budding more, And still more, later flowers for the bees, Until they think warm days will never cease...

- Keats

I was blessed with Mr. Page as my supportive advisor and advocate, my inspiring mentor and friend. He helped me to hold my mind and my heart courageously open through all challenges. It is a dream to return to his side, to the years of his nurturing.

But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.
- Tennyson

In the still moments of my life, when cheap incantations long to fill the happy, or frustrated, or peaceful, or tired, or nervous silence, it is the gifts of Mr. Page that give comfort and inspiration. It is the poetry that winds through my thoughts as they wind through the tribute before us. It is Mr. Page that I will always thank and remember.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.
- Frost

I can only hope that I have duly honored the man I have cherished for so long.

Stacie M. Steinberger

[stacie. steinberger@alum.dartmouth.org]

1996

JEANNIE MCNEILLY

[The following was written in 1999 for an earlier collection of tributes from Mr. Page's colleagues at TASIS England.]

When I think about Max, all the platitudes come to mind – inspirational teacher, learned scholar, devoted faculty member, supportive colleague – but somehow all the platitudes ring hollow. They simply don't capture the essence of the man, the exemplary character who, at once, embodies both seriousness and wit. Max has taught me much, not the least of which is that in literature as in life, character counts.

Obviously, he teaches his students that lesson and a great deal more; those students thrive under his tutelage, not only because of the breadth and depth of his knowledge, but

also because of his genuine concern for the "whole person," a concern he extends to faculty members by giving practical guidance and open encouragement. In so many ways, Max has made TASIS the unique school it is today; it has been enriched by his presence and it will be diminished by the loss of his active participation in its life.

Jeannie McNeilly TASIS England, 1993-1999

1998

DENNIS MANNING

[Dennis was headmaster at TASIS England from 1999 to 2001.]

An my nearly twenty-five years in work in education, Max Page stands as an intellectual titan. More than once this green headmaster turned to Max for counsel and guidance; I relied on Max as the taproot of institutional knowledge, of the most highly-developed understanding of his colleagues, and of the nuances of TASIS life.

I taught a senior English course in one of the seminar rooms, which was adjacent to Max's spiritual and pedagogical home - Seminar I - where Max taught his AP English classes. I will never forget the first time Max's stentorian voice drowned out my own as Max recited passages from his favorite play, Shakespeare's King Lear. My students and I simply stopped our discussion and listened attentively and clearly as Max"rambled on the heath," or "let the great Gods, / That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads," hold forth.

Max and I enjoyed several luncheon outings with Max insisting on driving in his Morris Minor estate. I remember so vividly the pride Max took in this splendid English car with its genuine wood panel siding and simplest of features. My wife Beth and I enjoyed our time with Max and Marcia entertaining us in their home and sharing with us the special treasure of his elegant English garden.

What a rich intellectual life Max leads--the secret, I believe, to the passion and power he has brought to the classroom for nearly four decades. Whether delighting in his garden, persisting until mastering a Bach cello suite, or parsing a line from Donne, Max has a mind that simply never tires. As Yeats asserts, his is a mind self-affrighting and self-delighting.

And I so much enjoyed sharing literary passages and quotes from poems, from Donne and Crashaw to Yeats and Eliot. Every minute in Max's company was one of intellectual challenge as well as excitement.

On a personal note, I will always remember Max reading a tribute to me at the end of my first year as headmaster in England. A leader wonders from time to time how he is perceived or appreciated by those he is charged with leading, and Max bolstered my self-confidence and inspired me to return for my second year as headmaster with new-found energy and direction. I will always treasure my friendship and colleagueship with Max (which I miss dearly), and I am inspired by his example every day of my life. Godspeed, Max!

Dennis G. Manning, Headmaster Norfolk Academy 1585 Wesleyan Drive Norfolk, Virginia 23502

1999

BETH FATUM

[Beth's tribute was accompanied by a generous donation from the Fatum family to the Master Teacher Award for Max Page.]

I had written on Goethe's The Sorrows of Young Werther, was returned to me by my professor. I looked it over, and realized there were no comments or feedback written on it. When I asked my professor about this, he said it was a delight to read and wondered if he could copy it for the rest of the class as an example of the kind of essay he expected. This is the kind of response my writing now receives thanks to the wonderful teaching of Mr. Page. I've saved most of the essays I wrote for his class, because I was proud of what he helped me produce. You could always tell by his comments that he really read your work, and took time to respond to it and help you improve.

But even more important than his skills as a writing teacher, is Mr. Page's love of the material. I can still see him, book in hand, marching around the classroom demonstrating Dr. Faustus confidently striding into hell. It was impossible not to get caught up in the books in Mr. Page's

class. I went on to write a major paper about Dr. FAUSTUS in college and to direct King Lear. I was amazed at how much I remembered about each from Mr. Page. They both seemed alive in my mind thanks to him.

I am both glad and sad to hear the news of Mr. Page's retirement. He deserves a break after so many years of phenomenal teaching, but I know any student would be lucky to have him and he will be missed, I am sure, by future generations of TASIS seniors. I know I still miss his class.

Elizabeth Fatum [efatum@abacus.bates.edu]

2000

MICHAEL WICKS

[Michael accompanied this tribute with a generous donation to the Master Teacher Award for Max Page.]

Mr. Page has always influenced me to strive for greatness in not only reading and writing but also, most importantly, in life. English has always been one of my more difficult subjects but Mr. Page was always more than willing to assist me. I specifically remember his emphasis on poetry and the emotion he portrayed while reading some to the class. He always found a way to get through to his students and strived to make our learning experience as informative and comfortable as possible. Not only did I have Mr. Page as a teacher but as an advisor as well. He was always ready with an open ear to listen and to help. He made learning intriguing and enjoyable, which is hard to pull off. His sense of humor and wisdom made going to class more of a privilege than an obligation.

Mr. Page was definitely one of my teachers that 1 will never forget, and 1 will forever remember him as a caring, funny, and inspirational person. I feel very fortunate to have had Mr. Page as a teacher and as a friend. I wish Mr. Page and his family the best in the future and have no doubt that he will inspire everyone he meets in and out of the classroom. Thank you Mr. Page for being a great teacher and caring friend.

Michael Wicks [wicks82@hotmail.com]



Max teaching AP English at TASIS England, 2002

2001

BARRY BREEN

Dear Max,

Every now and then a person with a real gift for teaching comes along — one who has the capability of exposing minds and hearts to the tumultuous vicissitudes and the boundless wonders of creation. That teacher's classroom is a playground where bonds with others are established, where life's lessons are taught and where the tools of civility are learned. As the tributes of this book so clearly attest, you are such a teacher. For thirty-five years, you have exposed TASIS students to the world of literature — exciting them, enticing them and delighting them. For thirty-five years, you have modeled the message of academic scholarship and servant-leadership for your colleagues. For thirty-five years, you have been the glue that has held us together and the embodiment of the mission towards which we all strive at TASIS.

I am grateful for the time we have spent working together, brief though it has been. I am grateful for the sage advice you have given to me and for the enthusiastic conversations we

have had about King Lear. And I am grateful to have had the chance to see the sparkle in the eye of a student turning at an assembly to tell you what you have heard from so many others – that you are the best teacher she has ever had.

Sincerely,

Barry Breen Headmaster TASIS England, 2001 to 2004

TARA SHEEHAN

[Tara Sheehan noted that the following essay was "used to get into Bowdoin College."]

MR. MAX PAGE

I have to say I was extremely nervous when I walked into his classroom. It was my senior year. I was in a new school in a new country. I had never taken an AP class (my previous school didn't offer them) and I was the only one in the class who had not taken pre-AP English. Moreover, no one could tell me what Mr. Page was really like. They just smiled knowingly. I had heard that he was an "institution" at TASIS, that he had been teaching there forever, that the standard would be high and the grading would be tough, that he didn't tolerate nonsense, but I couldn't picture what he or the class would be like.

Suddenly, there was the sound of a rush at the door. I heard the knob rattling. Mr. Page did not appear to walk into the room. Once the door was open, he seemed to swoop down on us like an elegant crane, coat-tails flying, elbows askew. For a brief moment, he fixed his razor sharp eyes on us, then strode over to the casement window and flung it open, remarking "Let there be light!" After settling his long bony frame into a chair at the head of the table, he began mumbling phrases in Latin and old English, chuckling to himself all the while and smiling at us. No more than a moment passed before he was rhapsodizing, in his perfectly enunciated British accent, on the subject of romance, chivalry, and love. I was spellbound. Never in the years I had spent in Florida schools had a teacher tried to capture his audience in such a way.

Over the next hour, I noticed that he expected and commanded no less than full attention. If someone began twiddling a pencil or looking out the window, he would stop abruptly, right in the middle of a sonnet, fix his eyes on that person and say something such as "Sir, do you mind!"

If at any time it appeared that the class was lost, he would dart, without warning or preamble, into connections between the romanticism of poets and that of students our own age. Then, just as quickly, once he had our attention, he would be back to the Renaissance poets.

Over the next few months, I began to realize that his enthusiasm for his subject was infectious. As I listened to him, I began to hear the voices of the writers, to see images they created, to understand what they were trying to communicate in ways I had never been able to before. It was almost as if he made them come alive. Perhaps what was more important was the impact he had on my own small efforts to write. I still remember the comments he wrote on my first paper. "That's fluff," he scribbled near the first paragraph. Then he wrote that the following paragraphs were better because I was "saying" something. Little by little, as I received one paper after another back from him, I began to realize the importance of getting in touch with myself, finding out what I had to say and saying it fearlessly. I also began to appreciate the worth of reading what I had written aloud to find out if I and others could "hear" it, if it "talked" in a way that made people listen. I don't think I will ever sit down to write again without reading what I have written aloud, without imagining how Mr. Page might read it and without thinking about what he would say about it.

Tara Sheehan [tsheehan@bowdoin.edu]

2002

REFLECTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

BY

MAX PAGE

TASIS Alumni Magazine

2001-02

Floday is New Year's Day and the hard frost outside my window is slow to melt in the sun. The Christmas break has temporarily removed me from the arms of my'alma mater', TASIS England. Indeed, at nearly 68 years of age, the umbilical cord itself might be severed by illness or by incapacity. But not yet! I am told that I am much the same as you left me, whether you left TASIS one year ago or twenty years ago or more.

This temporary separation from the school nevertheless enables me to reflect upon it and to try to establish clear and, I hope, honest perspectives of it; for TASIS has been my life. My wife Marcia and I are the only teachers left who started at the very beginning of TASIS England in 1976, (though several other teachers have been alongside us here for more than 20 years; the Crosses, Nancy Bennett, Akbar Khan and the Jepsons). Before that, of course, we had been at TASIS Lugano.

I have in my hand the very first TASIS England brochure, written of necessity before the school opened. (Tuition US\$ 2,950 – Room and Board US\$ 3,050 per annum!) Many of the photographs are in fact of TASIS Lugano yet this mish-mash exactly illustrates the state of mind that Marcia and I and all those others who had a hand in founding the English branch of the school felt as we left Lugano for Thorpe. We wanted to combine the best of the TASIS Lugano traditions with the opportunities for new growth in the different circumstances of England. Looking back on all that now makes me realize that the details that caused us so much work and worry really did not matter as much as we thought. All those things that most schools think are fundamental, such as buildings and syllabi, organizational structure, books, enrollment, and money do not guarantee a good school. Indeed, quite often dedication to those ends leads almost inevitably to a mediocre or even a bad school. It's the people who matter and their spirit. I mean our founder, Mrs Fleming, and the Boards, I mean the teachers and

the administrators, I mean the students, with their parents who chose us to help raise those children.

You and I have been fortunate. I have seen so many schools (perhaps you have encountered some too) where owners, headmasters, teachers and students play out silly roles and are never themselves. To be personable and honest enough, diligent and friendly enough, caring and kind enough to be one's best self for others is surely the way to live. Let us not take up little, selfish roles in life.

TASIS is a rare school, a strange world indeed as many students and faculty who have left the school have told me. Marcia and I have never left and so I must believe those who write to me, because it is very hard to fully appreciate what life you are leading until you move on to another life-style.

"Dear Mr. Page,

I cannot believe that it has been 21 years since I left TASIS! But I often think of my wonderful times there and the people who touched my life — and you were one of those."

This letter was from Gina Tapper and written in 1992. In my study at home there is a large red box, disguised as a leather-bound novel with the title The Ruins of Elsinor, a gift from dear Mrs. Fleming herself. This box is full of such letters, all money in the bank for my retirement! This does not contain the whole truth of our TASIS experiences of course (a "rose-colored" box), but it is important to realize that these feelings of thankfulness and gratitude and pleasure that we have when we recall our life at TASIS have been a major influence for good in our lives, that many richnesses of that time remain in our hearts and influence us still, for good.

I have many letters which speak of this kind of feeling from many students, both from those who were "successful" in terms of grades and colleges and personal success and from just as many who felt "unsuccessful" whilst in school. Looking back it was good. In the box, amongst many, are letters from Lauren Maxwell, Jeff Meyers, Tamar Farag, Laura Snook, Isabel Burr, Chris Smith, Jason and Brad Vopni, Allison Piercey, Darcy Powers, Stacie Steinberger, Ian Houston, the Berthiaumes, Richard Jensen, Ben Winteroth, a poem from Amelia Stone, a whole card of names from the '70-72 reunion at which former students recited from memory all the poems I

had taught them centuries earlier, and on and on. No sign of the "them and us" syndrome that plagues so many student-teacher relationships in other schools. Similarly there are letters and notes of thanks and encouragement from headmasters: De Fleming, Peter Stevens, through all the magnificent reign of Lyle Rigg and, more recently, from Dennis Manning. Some of these names you may know, others not but they have all made major contributions to the day-to-day success of the school. These letters of goodwill and encouragement are still as bright to me as bursts of different colored fireworks, equally wonderful from alumni or headmasters.

I have gone on for long enough — would like to go on for ever but I'm sitting in an unheated room! However, I cannot close without referring to the events of September 11th, 2001, which have made a great effect on us all. I would like to end with an extract from a speech I made to the Upper School on Remembrance Day (like Veterans' Day) 1995 which still seems to be relevant:

"I suppose some of your grandfathers may have fought in the Second World War and some of your fathers may have fought in Vietnam or in Korea. Some of you may have been at TASIS long enough to remember the bomb scares here when there was some anti-American feeling aroused over Middle East affairs, or you may have been in London when there were Irish bomb scares. War is never far away it seems... I hope you detected in the celebrations of Remembrance Day little of that gross patriotism which can do as much harm as good. No one wins in a war. Let us all be true patriots, good citizens of our own country and then we shall be more fit to become citizens of the world. Whenever in your life you see the poor being neglected, children in desperate need, or the old being deprived of their dignity, or see fanatical politicians misleading their country, or see minorities being ruthlessly crushed, or when you see Justice being corrupted, I hope that you will do whatever you can to help put matters right.

I hope that in peace as in war you will show the courage to fight hard in your professional life and in your personal life to make life humane. Here at TASIS, where we have close relationships with quite a broad spectrum of nationalities, we know the reality of international living so that we can avoid prejudice on the one hand and false idealism on the other. TASIS is a wonderful place to be in 1995, we are all well-off and safe. Let us make sure we do not grow soft or weak. Although we may not have to die for our country, for our family or for our beliefs, let us be prepared to live selflessly and vigorously for them. Then, when we grow old, perhaps we too

shall be able to look back over our lives with pride, like those old veterans."

In closing, we send our warmest greetings to you all on this 25th Anniversary of TASIS England. Stay in touch by word, in spirit, and through good deeds.

"Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen;

Duty, faith, love are roots, and ever green."
- George Peele

Max Page TASIS English Teacher TASIS Switzerland, 1968-76 TASIS England, 1976 to present



Max teaching AP English at TASIS England, 2002

DAVID CRABTREE

TO MY MENTOR OF ELOQUENCE,

set is no doubt that by now you have received an infinite amount of praise from your colleagues and former students; well, get ready to chalk up another on the tally board. I'm not one for bombastic glorification, nor would I even attempt to outmatch the flood of honoring speeches that I'm sure you have undergone by now. (Just a quick digression, I find it rather fitting that I'm using the word "bombast" in this letter — after all, you taught me the word in a vocab quiz... oh yes, right, the point of my letter — onwards!) With all this said, you will have to believe that everything following in this letter comes from the deepest reaches of my heart and soul with complete sincerity, unparalleled admiration, and loving affection.

You changed my life. Before your class, I'd never seen such caring and devotion in a teacher's eyes. You have a genuine wish to ignite the passion for literature in your students, the same passion that comes from inside you, and spread it like wildfire through their hearts. I consider you the giver of wisdom and humanity; you teach the subjects of virtue and morality – these are the gifts you foster in budding minds.

Please forgive this abstract diction that I am spewing forth, but I have trouble putting such teaching excellence into adequate wording. Let me try a different approach. While in your class, I started to grasp the role of an artist: his essence, his creation. I am studying film production now in Los Angeles, and your teaching — from your didactic explanation of the cathartic King Lear to the hubris-plagued Dr. Faustus - has instilled in me a desire and compulsion to become a filmmaker. An artist. And most importantly: a human being.

I am a walking testament to your edifying instruction. You are a craftsman, and I am your craft.

Thank you for your guidance.

David Crabtree University of Southern California Cinema-Television Production School [dcrabtre@usc.edu]

NICKY CRADDOCK

Few people have the ability to make such a lasting impression on so many people as Max Page has. The pure beauty of his classes was not merely that one could be inspired to an imperative love of English literature, but rather that, simply by attending, one would soak up an endless wisdom. That, to a group of adolescents beginning to discover themselves, could only be a wonderful insight into what lay ahead for them, no matter what road they took. Whether each of his students has taken a greater appreciation of English literature away with them is relatively unimportant, for I could imagine no greater educator that could enlighten so many to so much of life's insights in such a universally reflective and personal manner. He may retire from teaching at TASIS but his singular influence will not end there.

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2003

LINDSEY MOREL

[The editor wished to complete the series with a tribute from Max's final year in the profession. Loath to issue a public request for such a piece, or to ask Max who his best student was this year, or even to make a selection from a class list, the editor instead acted on a conversation he had recently overheard among some of Max's students. They described a classmate to whom Max had returned a writing assignment on which he had written: "If all my students worked as hard as you do, I'd feel no need to retire!" While the statement may not reflect Max's genuine view of his retirement, it certainly exemplifies his career-long desire to praise not only his students' achievements, but also their sincere efforts. The editor confirmed the story with Lindsey - who would never claim to be Max's best student, but who was eager, when asked, to contribute what follows.]

In years to come I am not sure what aspect of Mr. Page will stand out most vividly in my memory, but I think it will be his bow tie. I will remember how it seemed to quake as he hit the table forcefully and full-heartedly read King Lear aloud to us: the tie seemed to be the quintessence of all we adored about him. I have never met anyone like Mr. Page, nor do

I expect to ever again. His "English Gentleman" appearance, his distrust of science, and his infinite supply of anecdotes never ceased to brighten our class. Yet these pale in comparison to the greater things he provided his students as a teacher.

My twelve years in school (so far) may not provide me with the most extensive background for judging the quality of a teacher, yet I know that I have never had a teacher more dedicated and passionate about his profession than Mr. Page. For many teachers, that's all teaching is, a profession. That Mr. Page has been teaching for so long is solid evidence that teaching is of greater importance to Mr. Page than anything else, but that he is so willing to bestow his infinite wisdom regarding literature and life into our predominantly vacant heads is an even greater testament. I know that it is not every teacher who causes his students to steal books of John Donne's poetry after class, or who inspires students so that they can recite numerous quotations from Marlowe, Shakespeare, Shelley, Joyce and Hemingway.

Mr. Page has enhanced my love for literature immensely in the one year I have been his student - more so than all my other English teachers combined - and for this I am tremendously grateful. I realize that I am only one of many throughout the years who have sat in admiration of him during class, but I still consider myself extremely lucky to have had him as a teacher.

Thank you, Mr. Page for being such an exceptional, eccentric, and wonderful character.

Lindsey Morel



Max and Marcia Page 2001

COMMENCEMENT, TAS1S ENGLAND, JUNE 2003

LYNN AESCHLIMAN'S INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER, MAX PAGE

Over the years we have chosen accomplished and distinctive Commencement speakers who would challenge or inspire both our graduates and our faculty and guests, and this year is no exception in that regard. Yet for the first time ever we have chosen a speaker from the faculty itself---our own master teacher Max Peter Page.

Max was born and raised in England. He was brought up during the Second World War, left school at 16 and joined the Royal Air Force. He then returned to study, earning degrees with distinction from the College of St. Mark and St. John in London and the University of Leeds. He later took an M.A. in Linguistics from the University of Reading. Max taught widely different levels of students in England, Germany, and German Switzerland before coming to The American School in Switzerland, our parent school, in 1968. He has spent the subsequent 35 years in the TASIS schools in Switzerland and here in England. With his teacher wife, Marcia Hessemer Page, whom he married in 1971, he helped found TASIS England in 1976, and both of them have subsequently been mainstays of the school, helping build it into what one informed visitor suggested was one of the 25 best schools in the English-speaking world, a compliment of which all of our current faculty can also be proud and see as a legacy.

While at TASIS Max has been a dorm resident, fencing master, Academic Director of the TASIS English Language Summer Program, Dean of Faculty, and a director of musical and literary activities in the Schools. But his greatest achievement and renown have come in his teaching of English. It was not so long ago that teachers in American independent schools were called "masters," rather than "teachers." Max has truly been a Master of English, teaching two generations of TASIS students the skills and habits of intellectual discrimination, literary intelligence, and expository and analytical writing that are at the heart of a true liberal education and that really provide the necessary basis for all higher study. Hundreds of his students have eloquently expressed their profound gratitude to him. Last night we presented to him a specially printed volume of tributes, edited by our colleague Dr. James Lander, and written by dozens of his former students and present and former colleagues. Reading these tributes, as I have done, is a deeply moving experience and reminds one of what we are trying

to achieve in the TASIS schools. In the near future, copies of this volume will be offered to interested alumni, parents, and friends, and I hope many of you will choose to own one as a way of knowing about the life-work of Max and the history of the TASIS schools.

Max says that in retirement he will continue to help Marcia look after their three "willfully independent" children, play his cello with local groups, and tend his Italianate garden in Windlesham, growing lemons in the conservatory and writing poetry in the summer house. But we also hope that he will long continue to give TASIS England the benefit of his frequent presence and wise and witty counsel.

AFTERWORD

"Experience Measured in Years":
An Appreciation of Max Page
by
Michael D. Aeschliman, Ph.D.
TASIS Foundation

"Whether in art or life, submission and control are necessary: technique is the morality of art, just as morality is the technique of life."

G. Wilson Knight 1

Since I have known Max Page for thirty-two years, it is tempting and would be both easy and pleasant to reminisce and perhaps tell some charming anecdotes about him, but I shall not do so. Rather, I would like briefly to make a point about Max's importance to the TASIS schools and then write a bit about "his" tradition and some of his own teachers.

I came to Switzerland as a young English teacher at TASIS in 1971 when Max was Chairman of the English Department there. Those were heady, idyllic days, when the anarchic and corrosive effects of the 1960s were not yet fully apparent. Max had a solidity and wit to him that were reassuring and even inspiring to me after my year of teaching in a rural, poverty-area U.S. school, where I was expected to teach English to a hundred students.

In various roles I have been intermittently involved with TASIS ever since that time, and I would like to make the argument that Max more than anyone else over the last thirty-five years has given a decisive academic seriousness to both TASIS schools and that this has set an invaluable standard which will be as hard as it will be important to maintain. I do not wish to detract from the roles of Mrs. Fleming, the various Headmasters, or other teachers when I say that Max provided a young institution - at a crucial time in its history - with a functioning literary intelligence and eloquence that proved incalculably important (as attested in this volume) not only to his many students but also to fellow teachers and administrators.

In the 1975 TASIS Alumni Magazine was printed an essay on Shakespeare's King Lear

by Max's student Larissa Shmailo, an essay that was chosen by the U.S. College Board as the outstanding essay on the Advanced Placement English examination that year - a great achievement and honor for her, Max, and the School. In the same issue Max wrote: "There is no educator for me but experience measured in years... I agree with T.S. Eliot that we should not look for what is eccentric or what is special to a man, to an artist or to a civilization. What we should try to see is the common, the everyday, the universal. Thereby we are made [citizens] of the world, and of all time."

Teachers and students of English literature will recognize behind Max and Eliot the voices of Matthew Arnold, Samuel Johnson, Alexander Pope and other great writers and teachers stretching back beyond the very earliest products of the English language itself all the way to Aristotle and the Greek historians, not to speak of the Christian tradition. Max is a man in possession of a nourishing tradition, a tradition whose strength and continuity have been grievously weakened of late; and this weakening has occasionally wounded Max, too, during the course of his own teaching career. Much of our literature and art today are violent and trivial. As G. Wilson Knight expressed it, "Why, with our cross-word mentality - and much modern literature demands of us a cross-word technique - must we prefer puzzles to profundities? Is it not perhaps a way of avoiding embarrassing simplicities? Of using intellectual complexity to shield us from obvious truth?"²

I have quoted this passage - originally written around the time when I first met Max - and also introduced my remarks with the epigraph from Knight, partly because he was Max's most influential teacher at Leeds University, but also because the sentiments could be Max's. Knight was a very distinguished and influential literary critic and teacher throughout the period 1930-1970. His major critical works on Shakespeare are still famous and many of his arguments and insights have had a large effect on the way that subsequent teachers and scholars (and thus students) read Shakespeare, and literature more generally. Although never narrowly Christian, Knight was an opponent of materialism and scientism; critics called him eclectic, metaphysical, and mystical. Max is like his teacher in refusing to expel religion from the classroom, from adult discussion, or from life itself, in an age which has attempted to do all three.

Max had two other influential teachers at Leeds, J.M. Cameron and Alasdair MacIntyre. Both, as it happens, were moral philosophers who later emigrated to North America and became enormously influential: the now-deceased Cameron to Canada, and the still-active MacIntyre to the USA, where he is perhaps the most influential moral philosopher in the world. Thus can we see a noble tradition at work: Max (who had dropped out of school and joined the Royal Air Force before returning to university) inheriting and experiencing moral, religious, literary, and philosophical riches from particularly eminent scholar-teachers, and then, in his own personal way, conveying those riches of learning to many hundreds of students - and colleagues - in the two TASIS schools over a third of a century.

I should like to write more about Max, but I must content myself to conclude by quoting a passage from the most influential literary treatise ever written in English, Sir Philip Sidney's Apology for Poetry (1595), which provides a fitting description of Max's high vocation and accomplishment: "For if oratio next to ratio, speech next to reason, be the greatest gift bestowed upon mortality, that cannot be praiseless which doth most polish that blessing of speech..."

- 1 The Christian Renaissance (1962), quoted in The Morality of Art: Essays to G. Wilson Knight, ed. D.W. Jefferson (1969).
- 2 "Poetry and Magic," in Neglected Powers: Essays on Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Literature (London, 1971), p. 24.
- For observations on Knight and some selections from his work, see Roy Battenhouse, ed., Shakespeare's Christian Dimension: An Anthology of Commentary (Bloomington, Indiana, 1994).
- 4 An Apology for Poetry, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (London, 1965), pp. 121-2.



Fear on the Heath - William Sharp after a painting by Benjamin West: engraving, 1793

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Switzerland as an English teacher and dormitory resident.

In 1976 he moved to the newly-opened TASIS England school in Thorpe, Surrey, where he served for over 25 years as Head of English and Dean of Faculty. During his long and distinguished career he taught many thousands of students and fostered the well-being and professional growth of hundreds of colleagues. This moving and absorbing volume contains greetings and remembrances from many of the colleagues, friends, and particularly students who were challenged and inspired by their contact with Max. What shines through in this work, however, is not only the power of a great educator to inspire, but also the capacity of a unique and richly gifted individual to provoke profound and lasting changes in the lives of others.



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