the "net income sucker" in that relationship. He always did have a way with words.

Strangely, what I think I will remember best, and miss the most, are the chance encounters in the basement of Hamilton-Smith Hall. Bob had two offices at opposite ends of the basement—an office in the writing center and his faculty office with the comfortable chairs—so he was constantly patrolling the hallways. My own office was also in the basement, so at least once a week, and often once a day, I would see Bob approaching me, slightly stooped to reduce his height and bouncing gently as if he were hearing a tune in his ear. I would call out, "Hey, Dr. Bob," which was my way of paying respect and having fun with him at the same time. And he would always reply, "Hey, Dr. Dave," which was his way of telling me that he believed in me and expected great things in the years to come. I will miss that confidence, and I hope I can still live up to those expectations without my beloved, bearded rhetorician there to convince me that I belong.

University of New Hampshire
Durham, New Hampshire

Remembering Bob Connors

Andrea Abernethy Lunsford and Lisa Ede

This is the second time in two years that we find ourselves writing a memorial tribute for someone close to us. Two years ago we commemo-rated the death of Edward P.J. Corbett, our friend and mentor. When Ed died on June 24th, 1998 at the age of 79, we mourned his passing, but we also celebrated his long life and many contributions to the field. We could not have imagined that almost precisely two years later we would be mourning the untimely death of Bob Connors, who died in a motorcycle accident on June 22.

There is much to celebrate about Bob’s life and work, including his long and productive association with Ed Corbett. But since Bob died at forty-eight, not seventy-nine, our epideictic task feels harder to carry out. Bob should have had thirty more years—years of productive work and joyful living with his wife Colleen and daughter Ailinn. While we grieve
for those missing thirty years, we know that Bob lived his forty-eight years solidly in the present, and that he did so on multiple levels.

Our readers are aware, we are sure, of Bob’s many contributions to the field of composition studies. A graceful and prolific writer, Bob produced countless articles and books, some of which we worked on collaboratively. Bob’s research has been particularly important for the history of rhetoric and composition: from his “The Rise and Fall of the Modes of Discourse” to his most recent book, *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy*, Bob identified critical issues and developed powerful arguments that matter today—and will continue to matter in the future. But Bob’s interests ranged much more broadly than this. Over the last twenty-five years, he wrote about many topics, ranging from the theoretical (historiography, the nature and future of composition studies as a discipline) to the pedagogical (error in student writing, the relevance of the classical tradition for contemporary students). In a recent e-mail exchange, Bob wrote about his interest in what he saw as an important lack of attention to the sentence in recent research. He asked, “Why was research on this topic so important in the 1970s, and so absent in the 1990s?” These are important and difficult questions. When we think back to Bob’s many and varied studies, we realize that this ability to ask hard questions was a hallmark of his work.

When you know and work with someone as long as we did with Bob, disagreements are inevitable. Indeed, in recent years we have not always agreed with Bob’s responses to some of the questions he formulated. We have doubted Bob’s “take” on current historiographic debates, on the feminization of rhetoric, and on the role that men’s studies should play in theory and practice in composition—and we had plenty of friendly debates on these issues. What we never doubted, however, was the seriousness with which Bob engaged these issues and the intelligence, wit, and insight he brought to his scholarly and pedagogical work.

Bob was, we now realize, always willing to take unpopular stands. When Maxine Hairston published “The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing,” we (like many in the field) were eager to hail the revolution. Bob was more cautious. In “Composition Studies and Science,” Bob reminded readers of the specific material and rhetorical context of Thomas Kuhn’s work, and he raised important questions about the extent to which the field was—and was not—experiencing a paradigm shift. Similarly, in his most recent book, *Composition-Rhetoric*, Bob challenges readers to look harder at conventional disciplinary narratives that portray current-traditional rhetoric as essen-
tially degraded or utilitarian. Whether scholars agree or disagree with Bob, the field’s understanding of this period is significantly enriched because of his willingness to tell another story about it.

As a historian, Bob recognized the importance—and power—of telling stories. In the introduction to *Composition-Rhetoric*, he calls for scholars and teachers to “share our stories.” We would like to close this tribute with stories, stories that speak to us, and that we hope will also speak to you.

The first story is one of family. The last time that we saw Bob with his immediate family, Colleen and Aillinn, was at the 1999 International Society of the History of Rhetoric in Amsterdam. Aillinn had somehow grown from a toddler into a girl of seven. Scholarly conferences are not of great interest to seven-year-olds, but Aillinn bore with us as we eagerly exchanged news. We learned of Colleen’s continued artistic efforts (which range from poetry to illustration to clothes design), of the new home that meant so much to both Bob and Colleen. We talked of times in the past, and of the future—of the toy sailboat they had just purchased for their lake, of Aillinn’s schooling and Bob’s woodworking and stained-glass projects.

Those who know Bob primarily through his scholarly work may be surprised by our second story, which tells of his love of cars, motorcycles, and all things mechanical. Bob worked as a truck driver in a stint between his undergraduate and graduate studies, and there was a part of Bob that would always love both the open road and the care and tending of various engines that made time on the open road possible. Of course, this love had to be expressed in some writerly way—hence his articles published in *Car and Driver*. Bob used to say that he valued this recognition as much as any scholarly award, and he meant it.

Like many his (and our) age, Bob grew up loving music and defining himself in important ways through it. Bob loved New England, which was his home and source of much pleasure during the last two decades. And he loved crafts—stained glass, for instance. In recent years, he lovingly oversaw the building of an authentic replica of a Victorian home. He himself did much of the interior finish work for this home, finding and restoring old mantelpieces, building new ones, locating antiques. Bob planted an orchard, cultivated a garden.

Had he lived to be seventy-nine, Bob would have been able to see that orchard mature and Aillinn grow up. Undoubtedly, he would have seen countless new scholarly projects through to maturity as well. But had he lived longer, Bob’s life would not have been richer or more productive
than it already was. Bob lived every day fully, with a deep awareness of the importance of living in the present. We were reminded of this awareness when, in preparing to write this memorial, we read the words Bob wrote and published in *JAC* upon Ed Corbett’s death. In concluding his tribute, Bob wrote about Ed’s respect for others, his “abstention from warring cliques and dirty political hatreds, the social acceptance of difference, [and his] fullhearted appreciation of all good work.” This, Bob said, was Ed Corbett’s legacy to scholars and teachers of composition. “And to be worthy of that legacy is simple, really,” Bob added. “All we have to do is love life and love one another” (401).

And so we do. Though we, like many others, will miss Bob, we want to honor who and what he was—even as we mourn his loss.

*Stanford University*
*Stanford, California*

*Oregon State University*
*Corvallis, Oregon*

**Remembering Bob**

Cheryl Glenn

Bob would let me fiddle with just about any other part of our *St. Martin’s Guide to Teaching Writing*, but not the opening:

There it is in black and white. You’ve been assigned to teach a college writing course: first-year composition. Sentences, paragraphs, essays. “Me—teach writing? I never took a writing course in my life, except freshman English, which I barely remember. What am I going to do?”

I never liked that opening—not when we used it in 1988 for our first edition, not when we used it in the fifth edition. But Bob did. He wouldn’t budge on it. He thought it was a “grand invitation” to the teaching of writing. Every time we’d begin the revisions for our next edition, and every time I’d bring up that opening, he’d tell me, “New TAs like that opening.”