

## News release

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### "DOC" ESTRIN RETIRING - AFTER 35 YEARS AT NJIT

NEWARK -- To the world of science and letters, Dr. Herman Estrin, professor of English at New Jersey Institute of Technology, widely recognized authority on the teaching of technical communication and the philosophy of language.

But to the students at NJIT, he is "Doc" -- one of a rare breed of professors whose chief interest is teaching. Although he stands behind a monumental treasury of publication and professional involvement, he leaves his heart in the classroom.

"I know I'll miss the students most of all," he says referring to his retirement this June after a 35-year association with the school. "I want to be known, above all, as a teacher. I love the classroom. The students are my reason for being here."

To honor his years of dedication to them, his present and former students will be hosts at a testimonial dinner May 31 at the Town and Campus Restaurant in West Orange, a variation on the usual retirement function sponsored by colleagues, who will, of course, also be in attendance.

It is obvious in other ways that students will miss "Doc" Estrin next year. It's obvious when you walk through the halls of the student center with him and hear their easy "Hi, Doc," and listen to their friendly banter. He seems to make an effort to avoid stuffy academic halls in favor of such student hang-outs as the cafeteria, the student lounge, and the student publication office where he presides in a cluttered, doorless office as adviser to six student publications.

"I like to be where the action is," he explains, peering through horn-rimmed glasses in his best professorial manner. "And the action is where the students are."

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It's the smile that gives him away -- a non-academic smile that goes well with the voice and the easy wave of the hand. He has learned his own lessons well. Body language, facial expressions, dialects, tonal qualities of the voice, dressing for success -- these are all discussed in his popular course entitled "Philosophy of Language" for which he serves as a practical example.

As testimony to his teaching ability, he has seen 18 of his students publish papers in scientific journals, a rare feat in any case for an undergraduate. At present he is helping several students find publishers for children's science books which they have written and illustrated in his course in technical writing.

He believes students today have more social confidence than they did when he first began teaching in an old factory building of what was then the Newark College of Engineering. He remembers that gypsies lived then in buildings across the street where Rutgers-Newark now stands.

"Students today relate far better to the subject matter than years ago," he said. "They are more sensitive to the social scene -- more aware of the student-teacher relationship."

Among his students there are also thousands of professional teachers, since teaching teachers of technical writing is one of his fields of expertise. He has written several texts on the subject.

That teaching is his forte is amply demonstrated by his reaction to winning two awards of \$1,000 each in 1970 and 1971 for outstanding teaching. The money was turned back into an annual scholarship fund, now supplemented with funds from previous winners.

Thus it was that the tenth anniversary luncheon honoring a decade of Estrin Scholars was held at the Alumni Center April 24. Dr. Estrin, as host, said it was his way of saying thank you to his students, his former students, and members of the faculty and administration who had helped him during his 35 years at NJIT.

If students have been "Doc's" first love, then writers are his second. If his profession is teaching scientists to write clearly, his avocation is aiding and counseling New Jersey writers of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry, both published and unpublished.

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In his retirement he plans to continue his involvement in the New Jersey Author's Luncheon, the New Jersey Poetry Contest, and the New Jersey Writers' Conference, all of which he sponsors each spring at NJIT.

It was also Estrin who established New Jersey's Literary Hall of Fame in the basement of the campus library to offset the belief beyond state boundaries that New Jersey is a cultural wasteland. Among those named to the prestigious group of 76 authors are Robert Ludlum, Norman Mailer, Joyce Carol Oates, and Woodrow Wilson. His poster-map of New Jersey, entitled "New Jersey's Literary History," was researched by New Jersey historian John T. Cunningham and drawn by New Jersey cartoonist Bill Canfield. A map of the state pinpoints the location where each author lived.

Upon his retirement, Dr. Estrin leaves a legacy of eleven text books on higher education and scientific writing, over 300 scholarly or literary articles, four anthologies of poetry, a decade of Estrin Scholars, 21 authors' luncheons, 14 writers' conferences, four annual "Dress for Success" fashion shows, and four statewide poetry contests.

When he vacates his office in the Student Center, he plans to continue teaching -- but with a new type of student -- the professional engineer. He will offer courses to industries throughout the area geared to improving the speaking and writing ability of their scientists.

He also plans to continue his annual lecture series at the University of Paris and his guest lectures at universities throughout the world. He plans to update one of his text books and to do additional writing for which he has not yet found time.

A resident of Scotch Plains, Dr. Estrin holds a bachelor's degree from Drew University at Madison, and a master's and doctorate from Columbia University. He is a past president of the New Jersey Council of Teachers of English, the New Jersey College English Association, and the National Council of College Publication advisers. He is past chairman of the National Committee on Scientific and Technical Writing for the National Council of Technical English, and in 1952 he founded the New Jersey Collegiate Press Association.

"I've found it all very enjoyable," he says. "Working with new people with new ideas and different problems hones you well. You come back sharper and ready to go."

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