Ronald K. Pendleton- A Tribute to a Colleague, Exceptional Educator, and Friend

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Ronald K. Pendleton- A Tribute to a Colleague, Exceptional Educator, and Friend

Abstract
A tribute to Professor Ronald K. Pendleton who died on January 29, 2015.

Keywords
Tribute, Eulogy, Obituary

Author Statement
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Dr. Ronald K. Pendleton, PhD. (1940 – 2015).

With a heavy heart I am saddened to share with you that Dr. Ron Pendleton passed away in January 2015. He was for 34 years a professor of education at California State University, San Bernardino.

As cited in the Press-Enterprise Obituaries (2015), Ron was born in Los Angeles, California, on December 17, 1940. His early life was spent in Manhattan Beach. He gained: an A.A. degree in Education from El Camino Community College in Torrance, California; a B.A. degree in Psychology from Humboldt State College in Arcata, California; an M.A. degree in Industrial Arts from California State University, Long Beach; and a Ph.D. degree in Education/Technology from Arizona State University, Tempe.

Ron was also a graduate of the USAF Officer Training School, the USAF Pilot Training School and the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department Reserve Law Enforcement Training Academy (all three levels). I watched him excel as professional and scholar until his final glide.

It is not an exaggeration to say that Ron led an eventful life. Here are some of the things he did. He worked as a research associate at Arizona State University; he taught industrial arts at The American School in Stavanger, Norway; he was a manager and chief pilot for the Santa Fe Air Service in Hooper Bay, Alaska; he was a commercial pilot for Continental Air Service in Vientiane, Laos; he served as a combat pilot and forward air controller for the United States Air Force in Viet Nam; he was a social worker for the Humboldt County Welfare Department in Eureka, California; and he was also a technical illustrator for North American Aviation in Downey, California. He did all this before studying for his PhD degree. Hence I hope you can understand that Ron certainly loved life.

Right up until his passing, Ron was active as a professor of education in the Career and Technical Teacher Education Program in the College of Education at California State University, San Bernardino. He began at CSUSB in 1981, and in 2014 had completed his 34th year. His primary work was with adults who had already followed successful careers in business and industry and now wanted to become teachers. When I was working on my doctorate at the University of Missouri-Columbia, say around 1994, I was developing websites for education. Ron and I did not know each other. As he was innovative as well, he found me online and we started working via e-mail on website development when we could. Ron saw the importance then of the internet and the tool it would become for education. Ron and I worked together for seventeen years.

Ron was not just a professor either. He maintained active roles in the local community. In the music field he was president of the Inland Empire Symphony League and secretary of the Inland Empire Symphony Board of Directors. His community service also included being President of the San Bernardino North Rotary Club and a reserve deputy sheriff for the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department.
From his commitment to Career and Technical Education, Ron was a founding trustee for the CSUSB Gamma Nu chapter of Epsilon Pi Tau (international honor society for professions in technology). He served also on a wide variety of community and university committees. Later in his life, Ron practiced the martial art of aikido, and actually earned his black belt in 2012, two days after his 72nd birthday. Achieving this goal had meant eight years of rigorous training. It is fair to say that Ron's life touched the lives of many. He left a legacy in the work being done by the students he taught. There are many teachers working today who were credentialed under Ron's tutelage. They commented often about his positive nature, support, and the motivation he gave to many. He made many friends and shared love and joy with all.

Ron was a champion of the Career and Technical Education program at California State University, San Bernardino. He cared about people, and was and is loved by many. Ron will be missed. I will remember Ron as a loyal friend. We stood by the same code. Such trust in a person that you work with does not come often.

He was a strong man. As I walked to my office late in 2014, Ron was waiting by the elevator. I looked at Ron and said, "Ron, I love you!" Ron looked back at me, smiled, and said, "I love you too Joe." When the elevator door closed, I thought that might be the last time I would see him, and it was. Ron and I corresponded via e-mail often after that day.

In one of his last e-mails he stated, "Joe, if I don't make until the Spring, make sure you look out for our students." I replied, "Ron, I will do my best!"

He is survived by his wife, Elin Pendleton of Riverside, CA; his friend Debbi Motts of Landers, CA; his daughter Tammy Bontranger of Greencastle, Indiana; his sister Susan Kenney and her husband Jim Kenney of Orangevale, CA; a nephew Scott Miller and his wife Tracy Miller of Simi Valley, CA; a great niece and nephew, Jarad and Emily Miller, also of Simi Valley.

I will miss you Ron. Thank you for your friendship. I am a better man for knowing you. Thank you for all you did for me and for so many. Rest in Peace. You truly were a colleague, scholar, philosopher, warrior, and true friend.