

John Wissink Leaves Behind 30-year Legacy

Grand Valley State University's special education program is among the most extensive of its kind in the nation and it grew to what it is today, in part, due to the efforts and expertise provided by veteran faculty member John Wissink. Now, a search is on for his replacement.

Wissink, who turns 61 on April 28, is retiring after being part of the Grand Valley State family for three decades.

"I wanted to go out on top when I was doing well," Wissink said. "We have a real good program here in place right now.

"It has been a great time."

Wissink taught learning disabled programs for much of his tenure at the graduate level before teaching it at the undergraduate level.

"It has been a wonderful job," Wissink said. "I can go to almost any school in the tri-county (Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon) area and meet with people I know who have been my students over the years."

Wissink helped establish both the graduate and undergraduate programs for the School of Education.

"In the early years of Grand Valley, everybody wore two hats because there were so few staff members," Wissink said. "We all did just about everything."

Wissink, who was originally hired in 1969, took a leave of absence to return to the University of Arizona to complete his doctoral work. He returned to Grand Valley in 1972 with one of the first two learning disabled Ph.D. degrees in the country.

"The greatest thing we've done was to provide a program that is a quality program," Wissink said. "The proof is whether or not your students can be hired. Our students are in great demand."

"I'm proud of the dual-endorsement requirement. Grand Valley is the only program in Michigan to require it."

Wissink said the emphasis on educating – and diagnosing – the learning disabled has increased tenfold since his early days at



John Wissink conducts a class at Mackinac Hall.

Grand Valley.

"There is more of an emphasis on the learning disabled now," Wissink said. "Prior to my arrival, there was no curriculum for the learning disabled. We provided a service to fulfill a need."

An avid skier, Wissink said he plans to travel and tackle the slopes throughout the United States upon retirement. "I found that I enjoy traveling," he said.

Joseph Price Ending 11-year Tenure At Grand Valley

Joseph Price, who has been part of the School of Education faculty since 1987 and a founding member of *Colleagues'* editorial board, is retiring from GVSU this spring.

Price, 65, has taught special education programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels during the past 11 years. He cited health reasons for his retirement.

"It's a very difficult decision, because Grand Valley has been one of my most enjoyable working experiences I've ever had," he said.

Price said he plans to stay involved with urban education projects, youth fairs and promoting GVSU's Ghana connection by overseeing a pen-pal

exchange between students in that country and their counterparts in Grand Rapids, along with coordinating a "Books to Africa" campaign. He also plans to continue working with GVSU on its educational recruitment efforts involving the Office of Minority Affairs.

Outside of education, Price plans to travel with his wife, Mickey, and pursue his leisure loves of tennis, bicycle riding and camping.



Joseph Price

We Want To Hear From You

Grand Valley State University graduates are making positive contributions in the classroom every day. Many go unnoticed, except by the young people whose lives they are shaping. *Colleagues* would like to hear from our colleagues in order to share ideas, classroom breakthroughs and teaching philosophies. Comments and suggestions are encouraged and may be mailed or forwarded by e-mail to Cynthia Mader, assistant dean at maderc@gvsu.edu.

Colleagues

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