

# mentors

## MAKE A LASTING IMPRESSION

*Dr. David Gormsen '74 and Ashton Judis '10 discuss how DC professors shaped their life's path*

*by Michele Tinker, Director of Annual Giving*

Defiance College often cites close student-faculty relationships when touting the advantages of a DC education. But, what does that really mean in terms of lasting impressions and mentoring? The guiding hand of a professor can provide life-shaping experiences, as alumnus David Gormsen and current student Ashton Judis can attest.

Dr. David Gormsen '74, chief medical officer and chairman of Mercy Medical Center in Canton, Ohio, didn't think twice when asked to name the professor who had the most influence on him - Dr. James "Zeke" Frey, whom he credits with helping him decide to become a doctor. "He had a huge influence on me, huge."

Gormsen admits that he had not been a very accomplished student in high school and didn't have a good idea on career direction. Frey was his advisor, and in his second semester they had a good conversation. Dr. Frey had an opening for a lab assistant and offered it to Gormsen. "I interfaced with him much more, so I got to know him quite well. And my interest in studying became significantly increased. I did well

my sophomore year and took a little harder courses.

"My junior year, I loaded up - physics, genetics, histology, and more. A major load, and I aced my entire junior year." Gormsen was accepted into medical school in Chicago and spent winter term his senior year with Dr. Rich Sherman '68, a physician in Chicago at the time.

The friendship that started as student and professor lasted until Dr. Frey died. They talked on the phone and visited each other regularly with Dr. Frey coming along with Gormsen sometimes when he worked shifts in Mercy's ER.

Gormsen and his wife, Patricia, reside in Stowe and have three adult children.

When asked to name a faculty member who had a big impact on her, DC senior Ashton Judis '10 named Dr. Mary Catherine Harper (or MC as she is known to all on campus), associate professor of English.

"I had her my first semester freshman year, and she really was enthusiastic." Judis said that she knew she had to be ready to learn in Harper's class, so it pushed her to be prepared. "She always was enthusiastic of me and almost forced us to dig deeper

in thought. So that set the tone for my expectations as a college student, that I really wanted to learn. This was an opportunity I had to push myself for."

Judis feels she learned the most from Dr. Harper in composition and advanced composition. "She forced me to think outside the box in my writing, but also to be critical, to pay close attention to the format," Judis explains. Honing those skills is important for her writing now and in her future career.

A communications major with emphasis in marketing, Judis is very active on campus. As a Citizen Leader, she participated in a service trip to Jamaica and has just returned from a McMaster School trip to Belize. Other activities include serving as DC's Children's Miracle Network Dance Marathon coordinator, the Student Athlete Advisory Committee president, and the AmericaReads coordinator. On the volleyball team her four years at Defiance, Judis has been captain the past three.

Judis is from Livonia, Mich., and plans to return to Michigan for graduate school where she will pursue a master's in organizational leadership. "My passion is to work within the special education system someday," she says. ♦



*Dr. David Gormsen '74*



*Dr. James "Zeke" Frey*



*Ashton Judis*



*Dr. MC Harper*