

# Dr. Sibyl Severance: "One in a Million"

By B. Ray

So few times in our college careers do we have the luck to have a professor that we will always remember. So few times can we admit that we had fun in or enjoyed going to a lecture. We have all had the teachers who were too serious, or too tough, or asking too much, or just didn't seem to care about you after class. In our quest for higher knowledge, where the teacher is the mother and we the students are the still nursing babies, so few times are we loved and paid attention to the way we need to be.

And when we do find that one-in-a-million educator with the love and affection as a parent, it is especially tragic when we lose them.

Dr. Sibyl Severance, a cornerstone of the Delaware County campus from her arrival here in 1981 until her retirement in 1996, lost her battle with kidney disease on June 6 1997. She was 65 years old.

Dr. Severance graduated with a degree in English from the University of Michigan when she was 25 years old. Married just before her graduation, she decided to settle down and begin a family. Five children and over 15 years later, Dr. Severance took on the challenge of full-time mother and graduate student. She received both her Masters and Doctorate degree from the University of Delaware. She taught at old Brandywine College (now part of Widener University) before coming to Penn State.



Dr. Sibyl Severance  
1932-1997

Dr. Severance's legacy at Penn State won't just be her lively class discussions or her attempts to make people think, but also her overwhelming excitement she showed when the discussions became more lively and the thinking more deep.

Of the many stories shared about her in the past few months, fellow English professors Dr. Elizabeth Buckmaster and Dr. Carol Kessler collaborated on one that best typified her excitement for her students' thought process.

"One time in one of her classes the students were told to analyze a poem. When she asked them what they got out of it, one student said she thought it was obviously a love poem from a girl to her boyfriend. A second student agreed in principle, but felt it

had more of a husband to wife feel to it. Then she saw a real young looking boy in the back of the classroom and noticed he looked absolutely confused, so of course she wanted to get his reaction. After promising him that his reaction was his own and therefore could not be incorrect, he finally admitted that he thought the poem was about chickens. She pumped her hands in the air with clenched fists and screamed 'Yes!' She was so happy that this kid didn't listen to anyone and made the poem what he wanted it to be. She lived for that. There was never a wrong answer as far as she was concerned as long as it came from the heart."

Steven Severance, her son who works in the Delaware County campus library remembers his mother as

someone who was accommodating, but someone who could fight with the best of them.

"She always had new ideas, a lot of them, and she was never afraid to stand up and fight for what she thought was right, or if she felt she could help the kids."

He also remembers her coming home one night trying to convince him that she should stop being the "nice lady" and start being more strict. Needless to say, it didn't happen. "She just cared so much about the kids and she would do just about anything to help them."

From my own experience, I know she absolutely did.

On the night of her final class, ironically a class about Shakespeare, the writer whom she became synonymous with during her time here, the class signed a card for her and bought her a cake. The inscription on the cake read "For all the minds you've touched, thank you Dr. Severance."

She proceeded to thank the class and then tried to regain the order of the classroom so she could teach more. After repeated requests, she finally gave in to the students requests and started telling stories of her highs and lows as a teacher. "I guess you guys deserve it," she said.

There she went, thinking about her students again.

From someone who was in the classroom that night, and on behalf of every student whose mind she touched,....Thank You Dr. Severance

## No Matter What, Penn State Will Come Out on Top

By Katy Carroll

School is underway once again and the new year is bringing up new issues for the SGA. The SGA hopes to make returning to school more beneficial to both students and faculty. Anton Shuford, the president of the SGA said that this year the student government wants to increase the student participation here on campus. This ranks as one of their most important goals to tackle this year. Along with getting rid of the apathy held by most students, the SGA wants to make the clubs on campus more productive. He wants the SGA and the clubs to work together for events and to become allies.

As far as issues for the student body, one is the way in which students are handled by the Administration. The Administration is able to do what it wants with students and there is

little or no communication between the two. The SGA hopes to change that and help the students and Administration begin to understand each other. Also, there is an issue among other Penn State campuses for decreasing the limitations regarding what students are and are not permitted to do.

In addition to the Administration issue, Anton pointed out that there is a health issue for the SGA to tackle as well. The SGA believes that there should be a full time physical trainer or nurse available on the campus for the students. He brings up the startling fact that we are paying the second highest amount of tuition of state-funded universities and are hardly receiving anything in return.

JoAnne Johnson, the SGA secretary was happy to say that this year the Penn State Delco Spring Break Trip will be handled through the SGA

so it should run more smoothly than last year.

JoAnne would like the students to know that the SGA is there for them. The SGA is open and welcomes comments and suggestions from the student body. Another point JoAnne made was that anything which is built

with a strong foundation will come out on top. Even if the rest of the building shall fall, the foundation will still be there. The SGA hopes to be that strong foundation for the students this year, and are here to make sure that no matter what happens, Penn State will come out on top.

## Go Grab a Study Buddy

By Justin Hrebiniak

With the fall semester underway, students will invariably need help in some courses. What better a way to ensure success than by getting quality instruction from the Learning Center?

Study groups, are available for subjects like history, psychology, sociology, and religious studies. However, it is possible to develop study groups in many subjects upon

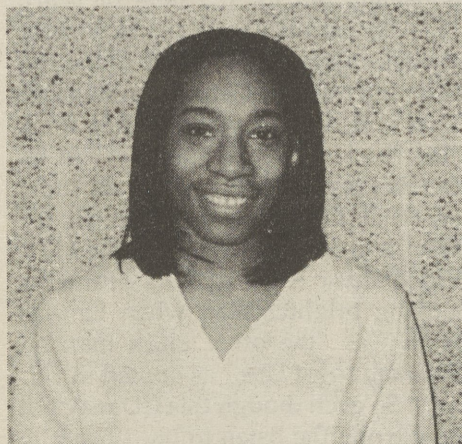
request.

The groups are student run, and students decide a permanent gathering time as well as choose a leader during their first meeting. Also, staff will be available to give tips on how the groups should be conducted, along with advice regarding effective working within the groups.

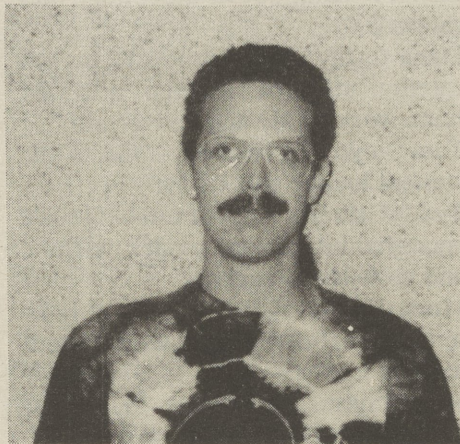
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## Photo Survey: Why Did You Choose P.S.U.?

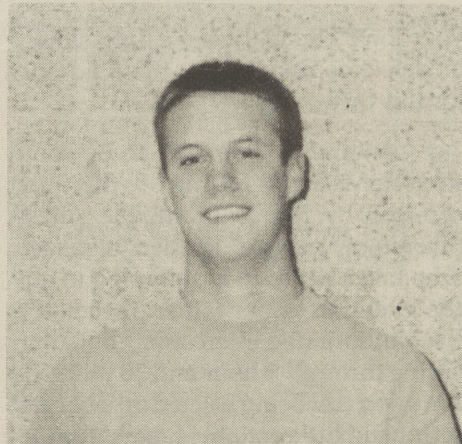
By Candice Meriano



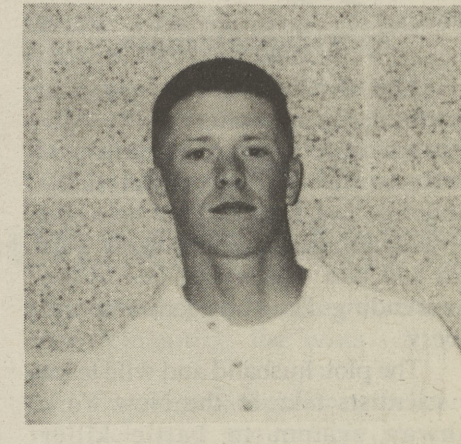
Tracy Best, first semester B.A.: "I have chosen Penn State because they offered me a grant. Also my sister attends P.S.U.; I visited and decided to attend."



Douglas Piccard, third semester English: "Penn State has a good reputation, they also accepted me into my major."



Dennis O'Leary, third semester Material Science and Engineering: "Penn State maintains a good reputation and it is also close to home."



Brian Lott, third semester Engineering: "I know that upon graduation, I am able to go anywhere with my Penn State degree because of the school's good reputation and equality."