

Dear Herman Debose,

Someone once said, "A teacher takes a hand, opens a mind and touches a heart." This quote could not be truer of Professor Jerry Schutte's Sociology 364 and 497 classes. Although I was not looking forward to taking an eight hour class on Saturdays, I was grateful that he had fought to get this class, so seniors, like me, could graduate on time. On the first day of class, I sat in a room full of strangers. Our professor introduced himself, told us to call him Jerry and informed us that we would get as much out of this class, as we wanted to put into it. The journey began.

From learning statistical research to mastering the who, what, when and where of science, we worked rigorously to learn the subject. We formed study groups and devoted countless hours outside of class learning the material. Jerry opened his room up for office hours when ever we needed it, scheduled extra meetings during the week for us to attend to get a better understanding of the material and dedicated his free time to meeting with our study group whenever we asked.

Jerry was passionate about his job, the subject, CSUN, but most of all he wanted to see us succeed. He saw the best in all of us, he believed in us, and pushed each of us to do our best whenever we doubted ourselves. Before we knew it the semester was over. I have never worked so hard, or been so proud of a grade in my entire schooling career.

Graduation day came and our study group, who just weeks ago were strangers, sat together as close friends and accepted our diplomas. Jerry shook our hands after our names were read and we celebrated this wonderful achievement in our lives together. Some time has past since my final semester in college. My professional life has now begun, yet, I often think back to that Saturday class and the lessons I learned. Although I learned so much about the subject of sociology that semester, I also learned a lot about life. Lessons I will never forget, important information I will always carry with me. I have Professor Jerry Schutte to thank for that.

A great teacher is someone who teaches from the heart, not from the book; a person who genuinely cares about each student, and takes the time to make sure that they understand the material. These kinds of professors are hard to come by. Jerry Schutte is a great teacher. There is no one more deserving of the CSUN Distinguished Teaching Award. He was the best teacher I have ever had. He touched my life. It was a privilege to be apart of his class, and I will remember it for a lifetime.

Sincerely,
Ashley Chaffee