

Remembering a Favourite Professor

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I was extremely fortunate to have spent my undergraduate years in McMaster University's special arts and science program. Many of the program's inspiring professors had such a formative impact on my life and career that we remain friends to this day. That the program exists at all, however, is a credit to its creator and program director, **Herbert M. Jenkins** (now professor emeritus).

In my last year of high school, I popped into the program office during a tour of the university. I had been offered a scholarship to study drama and 19th century Romantic English literature in the U.K. I was also applying to McMaster's arts and science program, but was worried about my chances of being accepted. He said: "If you accept this scholarship program, I will tell you right now, it will only enhance your application. And if you are applying this year and you get in, I will hold your position. Take the opportunity – it is something that will stay with you for the rest of your life." He was right. I matured so much in that one year that by the time I came back to university, I was really ready to start working and apply myself.

The following year I was in one of the program's foundation courses, and Dr. Jenkins was my academic supervisor. The course was continentally based and I was in the Africa group. My interest and passion for human rights started there – with his encouragement, I did research on the devastating impact of medical apartheid in South Africa. My growing interest in the connection between health and human rights led me to later apply to medical school. I can trace my decision to do humanitarian work in war zones to the ideas we debated and explored in those classrooms, and to the personal encouragement that professors like Dr. Jenkins gave me.