

All college professors know that they will be judged by their peers in three major areas: teaching, research, and service. Most of us focus on one of these areas primarily, usually teaching or research, and we look forward to leave, or sabbatical, to focus on whatever we have been forced to neglect or place on the back-burner. But Joseph J. Walsh has found a way to interweave these three elements into one inseparable bond, and he has used it over the years to bind, drag, rescue, and lift up his students. Although we honor him today as a teacher, it is impossible to isolate his teaching from his entire teaching and humanistic life. His career illustrates excellence in every sense of the word.

Joe joined the faculty at Loyola College in Maryland as an instructor in fall of 1987. By 1992 he was chair of the Classics Department, and he was immediately faced with the challenge of keeping his department vital, funded, and populated during a time of transition. He did exactly this, not only revamping the Classical Civilization major, but also making connections with the honors program and the Loyola “Alpha” program, designed to thrust freshman directly into challenging seminars with top-notch teachers. It is tempting to make reference here to his work in Roman history as providing a foundation for successful expansion, but it would be simplistic and frankly, inadequate. Joe not only found ways to support, strengthen, and expand his program, but he did so in ways that rendered a sum greater than its parts. It is no surprise that he ultimately served as co-director of the Loyola Honors Program and Humanities Symposium, as well as coordinator of the Newman Scholar’s program, and co-director of the Year in Leuven program. That last is particularly significant because Joe extended the program through a summer term so that engineering students, normally locked in a rigorous set of classes, would be able to take advantage of this opportunity to study abroad. Joe’s commitment to learning clearly goes far beyond transmission of the classical experience.

Letters of support from students, colleagues, and administrators at Loyola make it clear that Joe spares none of his own energy or time. He leads tours of students to museums in New York; he hosts “bring your own text” Christmas parties in his home. He has taught thirty-three different classes at Loyola, fourteen over the last five years. But many faculty do these things, and more would like to. The outstanding, amazing, and legacy-making project that sets Joe Walsh apart and makes us call him and his teaching “excellent” is called *What Would You Die For?*

*WWYDF?* is a translation of the ancient text of Perpetua’s Passion. Joe edited the text and wrote an introduction, but the translation was done by his students. This kind of project can be overwhelming. Effective and accurate translation alone is a huge undertaking, and working with students on such a thing means endless encouraging, scolding, correcting, consoling, revision, and just plain labor. It takes a very special teacher to be able to conceive of, organize, and then remain in the background of such a project. The text alone would be a triumph, but the way it came about, and what it subsequently engendered is truly staggering.

The Center for the Humanities at Loyola features a specific text for its annual symposium. When *Perpetua’s Passion* was proposed in spring 2005 as the next year’s text, Joe proposed a new student translation for use as that text. When this was approved,

he contacted students over the summer, secured their involvement, set them on a reading list, and had translation drafts complete by the end of fall term. This text was published by Loyola's in-house student publishing organization, Apprentice House, located in their Communications Department. This achievement is tremendous, but what follows is truly visionary. Joe persuaded the Center for Humanities to designate *WWYDF?* the inaugural volume of a new series to be called *Aperio: Loyola Humane Texts*. Another project is now in the works, in which philosophy faculty and students will produce a new translation of a play by the Jesuit philosopher Pontanus. Martha Taylor's letter of nomination sums up:

“Joe’s ultimate goal is for all Classics majors to participate in an *Aperio* project during their time with us. Apprentice House is the only student-run undergraduate press in the United States, and I dare say that Loyola’s Classics department is the only undergraduate program in the country that hopes to graduate all our majors as published authors.”

This is a monumental achievement, and a great legacy. Joe’s impact as a teacher reaches far beyond any one class, or major, or department, or even class year. A support letter mentions that on the way to his initial job interview at Loyola, Joe was involved in an awful train wreck, arriving “late, bruised from the horrific accident, in borrowed clothing”. He carried on with his presentation, was hired immediately, and began to make a difference from the first day. His students all talk about his rigor, accessibility, broad learning, and deep caring. While they contemplate what they would die for, at the same time the teaching career of Joseph J. Walsh makes it absolutely clear what he lives for and stands for. He is the epitome of an excellent teacher, and his contributions to education at Loyola will last for years and years to come.