

Paul Klinge (1918-1978)

...In Memoriam



Carl Sandburg wrote that “the good people keep coming on.” I think Paul Klinge lived his life by that principle. He treated his students and colleagues with a respect that showed how closely he held that belief.

Until Paul accepted me as a student teacher, I had been studying biology teaching in a vacuum. After observing a number of biology teachers in Indianapolis schools, I was convinced that, in Paul’s classroom, I would get the most out of a limited (nine weeks) experience.

At that time, Paul was teaching biology at Howe High School in Indianapolis. He was a busy, devoted instructor; one more student teacher could have become a burden. I had to convince Paul that I was committed to teaching before he would allow me to deal with the young people in his classroom.

As a result of my student teaching experience in Paul’s classes, I very quickly learned about what we now call “style of teaching.” It’s not a style at all. It is simply an honest concern for youngsters and their problems and potentials. Paul was deeply committed to the good people who “keep coming on.”

Paul accepted me, and he became my model. Whatever success I have had in biological education I owe in large part to him. He treated his students with the same respect that he showed me. Paul let us know that we were as important to his life as he was to ours.

Paul left the high school but still kept his students in his heart. Although he became an administrator at Indiana University, his roots remained in the biology classroom. My last talk with Paul was about how we could get good human genetics education into the classroom. He told me to go after it. And I will.

Thanks, Paul.

Manert H. Kennedy
President-elect

National Association of Biology Teachers

I first met Paul Klinge in 1958 and my life was forever changed. Paul was a major factor in getting me interested in NABT—first as a contributor to the journal, then as a regional director, and finally as an officer. In 1964 he was involved in a crossroads decision that irrevocably altered

my future—whether to accept an invitation to succeed him as coordinator for school science at Indiana University, or become NABT's first fulltime executive secretary. And for the final five years of Paul's editorship of *The American Biology Teacher*, I served as his managing editor. Regarding this association, I wrote (in the December 1969 issue of this newsletter), "It has been an interesting and delightful experience and I consider myself fortunate to have had Paul Klinge as my mentor." In recent years, when Paul no longer occupied an official position in NABT, his interest in the Association never waned—not infrequently a brief note or memo would reach my desk in that inimitable handwriting, and signed simply, "PK." I shall remain forever indebted to Paul for sharing with me his standards of excellence, and for his professional assistance and personal friendship. I, too, miss him greatly.

Jerry P. Lightner
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Editor's Note: Dr. Lightner's remarks appeared in *NABT News & Views* 22:3 (June 1978).

The occasion of Paul Klinge's death and his request that I be a pallbearer has been one of my most honoring yet difficult experiences. On that Saturday, April 29, 1978, I helped bury a friend, advisor, and colleague who has helped to make my professional life something it would not otherwise be.

I first met Paul Klinge when I was a high school biology teacher attending a summer institute at Indiana University. As Coordinator for School Science, Paul conducted one of the sessions that summer in 1961—it had to do with development of the BSCS versions. Later that same year, when inquiring about possible programs of graduate study, I sent letters to three universities. Two responses came in the form of dittoed letters "with catalogs being sent under separate cover." The third, from Indiana University was an individually prepared, personal letter answering my questions and suggesting some options. It was Paul Klinge's office that responded to my letter.

When I came back to Indiana University to start my graduate studies, Paul Klinge was my first academic advisor. The doctoral program in which I later enrolled existed because Paul and others had had the foresight to encourage the University to offer the doctorate especially designed for science educators.

My first administrative appointment at Indiana University was in the same office that had answered my letter of inquiry six years earlier. By that time, Paul had moved on to central administration responsibilities. As the newest Coordinator for School Science, I was constantly awed by the things that Paul had accomplished before me. I found it exciting to become Director of the extremely successful High School Science Student Institute, which Paul had

originated and directed. It was the first of its kind to be supported by the National Science Foundation. This product of Paul's commitment to science education and to the youth of this country has become a national model. The many scientists and science educators it has produced are living examples throughout the world of what Paul stood for. The Institute is still in existence today after over 20 years of continuous NSF support.

In addition to holding the rank of Professor of Education and numerous administrative titles, Paul served as assistant to three presidents of Indiana University. His commitment to the University was total. Paul earned the respect and affection of all with whom he came in contact. To his colleagues he was known as "PK." It was always something rather special to receive a memo from the Assistant to the President of the University signed simply, "PK." I recall a comment I heard several years ago which seems to illustrate best the combination of respect and affection which everyone had for Paul. Someone said, "PK really carries a big bucket of water around this place." And they were right.

It may seem that I have said more about myself than Paul, but Paul is part of me, as he is of the many people who came to know and admire him. I hope that what I have said here represents, in at least a small way, what his life has meant to the many individuals, institutions, and organizations of which he became a part. In a way, as I have learned, PK will always be living within us.

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The ever-present twinkle in the eye, the ready smile, the wry and mischievous sense of humor, the unselfishness, the abiding curiosity, the fantastic memory, the readiness to help, the quiet confident "can-do" demeanor, the enjoyment of people and parties, the zest for life are among the many attributes one easily recalls about Paul Klinge, truly an uncommon man, truly a professional.

In 1951 Paul Klinge enjoyed an enviable reputation as a biology teacher at Howe High School in Indianapolis when I was a fledging biology major at Butler University. His volunteer assistance with our science teaching methods course was my first exposure to this person who subsequently was to have a major influence on my own life and professional career. In the following years, Paul took the time, trouble, interest, and patience to introduce this neophyte to many horizon-expanding experiences—from science fairs, through advanced placement biology, through professional service in NABT, AIBS, AAAS and NSTA, through authorship, through science student and science teacher institutes, through consulting and curriculum development and university administration. In each his leadership, counseling and encouragement were unfailing.

Were I the only recipient of such generous attention and assistance this fact would be unremarkable. In reality the above litany more nearly represents the norm, for Paul Klinge was a sharing person and a positive influence on all who knew him. He will be sorely missed. The void in the hearts of those having the privilege of knowing Paul can however be readily filled by savoring the rich memories of this very special person.

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At the beginning of Howe High's 1948 school year, I was relieved to learn that I had been assigned to "Klinge's class." Not yet 30, Klinge, as he was known to all, already had a semilegendary reputation as one of the best teachers in the school and, because this was my first formal instruction in a field I had already decided to follow, it was comforting to be in good hands. He had a practice of giving extra points if anyone could prove him or the book wrong on any point, and he would sometimes intentionally give wrong bits of information just to bait critics. I first came to his attention because of the frequency of my challenges. He would smile as the points added up, and we eventually called a truce. While visiting with him in Bloomington a few years ago, he recounted with considerable satisfaction to my 15-year-old son how he had me working my tail off by means of that simple ruse. Many more tales were recounted that day, and my son asked in wonderment, "You mean you were friends with your teachers?"

We were friends for thirty years following those first contests, and his capacity for friendship was at the heart of his skills as a teacher. His interests were in people and ideas, and he was not a disciple of particular formalized instructional methods, at least none that has been invented since Socrates. When "teaching by inquiry" was reinvented, I realized more fully what Klinge did so naturally.

Paul taught me far more than beginning biology. For three years of high school, he twisted, turned, and shaped me much as a potter thumps a piece of clay. He directed and guided me in a three-year research project; an experience not matched until my thesis research. He took me to my first AAAS Meeting where I had the exhilarating experience of watching real scientists call each other liars in public. We went to meetings of the Indiana Academy of Sciences and, at one, he gave a paper on somatotyping, a fashionable topic of the time, and one on which he had collected a lot of data. Of even greater interest were the cultural trips when members of what would now be called "Klinge's Mafia" would drive to Chicago or St. Louis for a weekend and obtain first experiences with museums, big hotels, and management of menus in good restaurants.

Most important of all was the talk; yards and yards of it with Paul judiciously employing the verbal needle or scalpel. Paul's genius as teacher and friend was that he always listened and always responded.

I was able to share another aspect of Paul's career and one that was another facet of the long tutorial I enjoyed in high school. He helped his mother run the family paper business located in Indianapolis's old city market, but there were also some butcher shop customers on the South Side of town and Paul called on them regularly. Because I lived on the South Side, I would go on the rounds and listen to how high schools are run, on why teachers act the way they do, and all manner of school-related detail that has been of inestimable value. Paul would spend a lot of the time in the paper stall at the market pointing out characters, with which the market was richly endowed, and trying to figure out what they were up to. He was usually successful and would chuckle with delight. When you were with Paul, you spent a lot of time laughing. He laughed at everything, including himself, and he was a master at discovering humorous incongruities in the human scene. His ability to twist a phrase, frequently in an earthy manner, made all conversation interesting.

Paul taught the value of knowing "what's going on." His later administrative skills were in no small part due to his talents in this department. A fond memory is Paul standing outside his classroom with his hands behind his back, his chin lifted and eyes partially closed (minus the cigar that became associated with this stance). When asked what he was doing, he would always reply, "just surveying the scene." His position as business manager of the school provided him with additional opportunities to observe and analyze colleagues, staff, and students. He was particularly fond of observing the principal, and was a talented mimic of some of his actions. The teeth-sucking mannerism that Paul used frequently and with effect was borrowed from that worthy gentleman. Paul's emphasis on understanding human behavior is perhaps the lesson I most appreciate. Certainly, his abilities as a troubleshooter were due to this talent. In recent years, I frequently asked him what he did, and he would say, "whenever you see a major dignitary getting off a plane or making a speech, you always see someone just behind looking things over. Well, I'm the guy in the background." That image is not far removed from the young teacher standing in the hallway.

Paul's house was always a discussion center during weekends and summer evenings. These were informal gatherings of present and past students and frequently other teachers. The arguments were long and a constant refrain was Paul's exhortation to "define your terms"; and when I couldn't, I would go home and read, and then write him long essays that he would cut to pieces and return. The essays turned into long letters castigating higher education when I went to college. They were all answered, and as I learned later, kept. Paul gave them back

years later so my sons would perhaps realize that they were not the first college freshmen to be frustrated.

My good fortune in being assigned to Klinge's biology class was shared by many other students, and I often asked Paul if he shouldn't have stayed in teaching. He was cognizant of the general dilemma of great teachers being removed from teaching, and his feelings about his own case were mixed. There will probably never be enough Paul Klinge's to go around, but for me, he represented a standard for what is possible in the education of young people.

I like to think that Paul is standing around somewhere checking out the scene, making sardonic comments, and generally feeling pleased with himself that a lot of people feel he spent his time well.

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resentment, alienation, and ultimately, in social deviance. Clearly there is enough evidence today of social deviance to justify our fear of it, but, the question that continues to nag us is whether social deviance exists because of blocked opportunities and insufficient choice, or whether it exists for exactly the opposite reason—too much independent choice and too little guidance from the community, the church, the culture, the family, and the race. As Wilson says, "There is absolutely no reason to believe that extending rights will reduce violence. Indeed, there is as much evidence against as in support of that proposition" (1977).

Scholars disagree intensely on this point. Because they disagree, it is important to examine our policy and see if it reflects both sides. So far, public policy has been unbalanced. Though there have been many gains in the realm of new rights and privileges, there have been no new extensions of adolescent obligations.

The wider principle is that there are two elements with respect to policy on adolescence and two modes through which the wider society can encourage adolescent participation. One is sponsored, and on the adolescent's part, voluntary; the other is required, and on the adolescent's part follows in exchange for privilege and protection. Both styles should be encouraged in public policy, for without both, public policy will remain out of balance and ineffectual.

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Conservation

To waste, to destroy, our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed.

Every man holds his property subject to the general right of the community.

Theodore Roosevelt

Our primary task now is to increase our understanding of our environment, to a point where we can enjoy it without defacing it, use its bounty without detracting permanently from its value, and above all, maintain a living balance between man's actions and nature's reactions, for this nation's great resource is as elastic and productive as our ingenuity can make it.

John F. Kennedy