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Alums appreciate high standards set by retiring accounting professor

By Rachel Oakley, SBA/CAS '16

A great leader finds joy in the success of others and inspires generations of future leaders. After 51 years in the classroom – 30 at Oakland – it's safe to say Accounting Professor Gadis "Buck" Dillon, Ph.D., has done just that.

Dr. Gadis (Buck) Dillon always takes time to meet with students.

After three-year phased retirement, Dr. Dillon is teaching his final semester at Oakland in winter 2017. Alums wholeheartedly agree his zeal for making sure they were academically and professionally prepared had a lasting impact on their success.

"He instilled the confidence in me that I could do it," says Michael Dingwall, ACC '92. "When I first started college, I wasn't sure it was the right thing for me. I was insecure. Buck provided the confidence in me that I could excel in academia and life."

That confidence was well placed. Dingwall is now partner at RSM US LLP, the fifth largest public accounting firm in the U.S. "Buck is so happy when his students succeed," Dingwall says. "When he heard I made partner, his was one of the first messages I got."

Measuring success

Dr. Gadis (Buck) Dillon teaching one his last Accounting classes in winter 2017.

Dr. Dillon's genuine pleasure in seeing others succeed left an impression.

"The way he approaches teaching helped me become a better coach and a better sharer of knowledge," says Steven Sosnoski, ACC '93, C Sequoia Tools, Inc. "My success is measured m by how well the people who work for me have d for themselves than just my own personal succe That's something Buck instilled in me. Buck tau me so much in terms of managing people."

"He had a ripple effect," agrees Michael Brown, '97, partner, Dowling & Yahnke LLC. "I determin success based on the success of the people I a leading."

Dr. Dillon's high expectations extended beyond classroom, always encouraging students to rea higher.

"Buck held his students to a high standard and helped them achieve great things," adds Brown pressed that if you're going to do something you should do it well." Dr. Dillon encouraged Brown to join BAP and OASIS, where Brown practiced his leadership skills.

There's a method to Dr. Dillon's demands. "I have a level of expectation and I beat the students up pretty badly," he jokes. "I think it is necessary because once they leave college they need to have the professional drive, they need to be ready to make the commitments."

Korry Bates, ACC '09, MAcc '10, risk assurance, PwC, appreciates Dr. Dillon's approach. "I called him when I passed the professional au section of my CPA exam. I thought his class was harder than the exam. Because of that I walked out of the exam knowing I did a great jo

As a student, Bates worked with Dr. Dillon to launch OU's nationally recognized chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants

Professionally prepared

From drilling concepts to connecting students with student organizations, accounting professionals and conferences, Dr. Dillon made it a priority to ensure his students were also professionally prepared.
"He helped us think big picture and see how things are connected. When we're interviewing for jobs, having that perspective on what to expect really puts you ahead of the other candidates. It gave me a big advantage," says D'Lorean Bell, ACC '12, brand finance analyst, FCA.

Rebecca Braga, ACC '13, MAcc '14, assurance staff, Plante Moran, sums it up. "To learn from him was an honor. The best way I can thank him for the wisdom he's shared and the direction he's given my career is to do the best I can, because that's what he enjoys and expects of us."

Dillon responds humbly: "I have been extremely fortunate through the years. I have been associated with some truly outstanding students who have been willing to work hard to be successful. I value the time I spent here, all the relationships and ties I've built. It is with some reluctance that I actually hang everything up and leave."

The 34th Annual Accounting and Financ Banquet on April 14 wi honor Dr. Dillon's servic as well as the accomplishments of th Accounting and Financ scholarship recipients. Those wishing to hono Dr. Dillon may consider gift to the Dillon Legacy Fund (30376), which ca be made online at **oakland.edu/give**.