



Letters Editor to the

Editor's note: Eastern Washington University reserves the right to edit letters for space, content and material of a potentially offensive nature.



Remembering LeRoy "Basher" Burns

I just read the Obits in the EWU magazine and was sad to see that my old pal of 1948-49 had passed on to the place where all good Marine Corps Reserve members reside "when the tour ends." Those of us in Hudson Hall knew him as Basher Burns. While he was a self-appointed coach of what he called "Burns' Bums" you could always count on him to field a team for intramural basketball or softball. Now the team wasn't always the most astute or talented athletically, but we could always depend on Basher to have a team. Sometimes when a "member" was downtown doing "homework" at Bill's instead of attending to the challenging league play, Basher would "draft" anyone who happened by that even appeared to look like someone that might, intentionally or accidentally, participate in either basketball or softball. We were never apprised whether he attempted to proselyte any of the young lovelies from the campus to "fill in," but he was a dedicated coach and was determined to see that Burns' Bums were there to participate. At this late date I can't recall why we settled on "Basher" as his campus name but it seems like it stemmed from his short, post WWII service of a year in the USMC. He, like Pat Shields, '50, and Tom Christenson, as well as Mort Sullivan, Don Wall, Jim Allen and several others were still members of the USMCR in those days, drilling on North Assembly Street in northwest Spokane.

LeRoy served in Korea with the Marines, and for that he needs to be remembered – not only as a coach but a special kind of American hero. Basher was an alum that all of us who knew him would continue to be proud of. As a Sailor, I wish I could have been there as a pallbearer. He was a special human being. May he rest knowing his old "buddies" are still cheering on "Burns' Bums."

Jim Rabideau EWCE '49

In Praise of Dr. Fletcher

My wife Anita and I enjoy reading about who from Eastern has published a book. Thanks for page 19.

Since we attended EWU when it was EWSC in the late 1960s, we like to follow some of the activities of students who graduated, or attended. We were fortunate to have Dr. Eugene Fletcher as our professor at the reading clinic there. We have attended colleges and universities in many states, but he was the only instructor who could take non-reading students of any age and teach them how to read. We learned a lot from him.

I received an MEd in special reading in 1970 from Eastern and was hired to teach in Oregon. The superintendent told me not to worry about boys who were not reading by the end of second grade, because they will learn later, and they were probably "too immature" to learn any earlier. Dr. Fletcher's approach helped us begin at the kindergarten level, and by the time we left the district in Oregon three years later it had much higher expectations and the "immature boys" had seemingly disappeared, and best of all the boys who came into primary were much happier – because they learned to read. Dr. Fletcher said many students who do not learn to read in first grade develop painful "emotional overlays" that cause them to find ways of avoiding the reading process.

Anita and our daughter Suzi put together a manual that has been used in many districts, and in 2004 they put the thing online (www.readinghelp.com) for anyone to download and use for no charge. Both Suzi and our son-in-law used the methods outlined to teach kindergarten children to read as they became interested. We have received many e-mails from parents and teachers who say they are grateful for the information at the website.

We would like to recognize Dr. Fletcher with this letter.

Lee Townsend '70

(Editor's note: Dr. Eugene Fletcher taught at Eastern for 20 years. He passed away in 1994.)

Go Greener

Thank you for this last edition of the EWU magazine for Alumni and Friends. I enjoyed the magazine as I usually do, it was great reading the article, 'Going Green.' It was good to hear all that is being done at EWU. Why not take it one step further and send the EWU magazine via e-mail and save a tree?

Regards,

Mary C. Strunc '91

(Editor's note: *Eastern* magazine can be accessed electronically at www.ewu.edu/easternmagazine.)