

## A Tribute to John O. Browder

Many people know us, but they all have different experiences with us. Their different memories add up to the cumulative effect we have in the lives of others.

Here are my memories.

John was a great colleague, professor, and friend. We had much fun doing our rewarding work together. He did fine research trying to save the world, or at least his not-so-small part, the Rondonia region of the Brazilian Amazon. He excelled especially in curriculum design for topics reflecting his passion—advancing progress in underdeveloped countries and protecting the environment.

Not everybody remembers that John created and taught key courses in these curricula. His *International Development Planning* course became a university-wide course cross-listed in four departments. His *International Development Studio* gave practical experience to graduate students focusing on advancement in poor countries. His *Global Environmental Issues* course became a key course in several majors across campus. His *Environmental Ethics* course exposed students to the morality and values concerns of ecological problems. His *Advanced Planning Theory* course raised the theoretical bar for PhD students. John gave up much of his teaching to other instructors when he took on his stint as associate dean, but he was happiest when he stepped back full time to teaching his favorite courses. For nearly thirty years, Virginia Tech benefited from the innovation John brought to the curriculum. And hundreds of Tech students and graduates are part of his legacy.

John took his passion to the community. He promoted the concept of a nature park for the town-owned Brown Farm, and led the effort, fighting off the soccer people, to convince the Town to establish the Blacksburg Heritage Community Park and Natural Area. This too is part of his legacy.

John was a scholar and a productive academic, but he was also a fun-loving Michigander. It was fun to discover that he and my wife Sandy grew up near one another in Ann Arbor. While they never met there, they went to the same junior high and high schools one year apart (Go River Rats!), had mutual friends, and even spent their rising senior summer (a year apart) with the same family in Spain.

When we interviewed John for his position at VT, I recall his finishing a carafe of wine over dinner, saying “Well, I guess we killed the keg—how about another?” I thought to myself, “I can work with this guy.” And we did for almost 30 years. When I retired four years ago, John and Trish gave me and Sandy a great retirement party at their house; one of the party highlights was his sweetly showing off to the group Jayna’s Busy Book that Sandy made for her when she was a baby.

One of his favorite pass times was playing a game his law professor father allegedly developed at the University of Michigan Faculty Club—Michigan Bottle Pool. John brought it to Blacksburg, and we played it for a few years at Squires. Then he moved the occasional Tuesday evening game to Kent Holliday’s for a group of hackers who played, but rarely as well as he, then followed the game with Hardball political conversation. We still play and will continue to play, with John looking over our shoulders.

John Randolph  
UAP Professor Emeritus