

## Pride runs in the family

My mother left me a note to “let OU know,” so it is with a heavy heart that I inform you about the passing of my mother, Penelope Cook Williams, who graduated in 1961.

My mother truly loved Ohio University, and I would like to share just a couple of memories out of respect for her.

My father, Richard W. Williams, graduated from Ohio University in 1960. Although they attended Ohio U. for three of the same years, my parents didn’t meet until 1963 at an alumni event in southern California sponsored by the Los Angeles area alumni chapter.

Looking back at my childhood photos of me in my green and white T-shirts and sweatshirts, I should have recognized the inevitability of my attending Ohio U. much earlier than I did. In youthful rebellion, I was considering Ohio State and

Case Western Reserve until I laid eyes on the rolling hills, cobblestone streets and ivy-covered halls of Athens, Ohio.

Attending Ohio University was enough to earn me a lifetime of brownie points with Mom! She loved her Mothers Weekends like no other. One of these weekends marked the first time I ever shared a beer with my mother (in The Pub), which I remember as a rather surreal experience!

Although living in Texas makes it difficult to get back to campus, my mother and I were last there for Homecoming 2000 — with my 16-year-old daughter on a recruiting visit! The weekend was filled with all of the incredible beauty of Athens in the fall: the wonderful tradition of the Homecoming Parade down Court Street, the energy of the alumni marching band — all capped off by a miraculous 52–3 victory for the football team!

For Christmas 2004, I bought my mom four tickets to the 2005 MAC men’s basketball tournament games at Cleveland’s Quicken Loans Arena. Although the Bobcats were good that year, it was a long shot that they would make it to the championship, but I thought she would enjoy the games anyway. The fact that they won it all, in the most dramatic and magnificent possible way, was beyond our wildest dreams! I was watching every dribble on ESPN from my living room in Texas, but Mom was there in the building having the time of her life!

Ohio University provided some of my mother’s most treasured memories, and sharing our love for this glorious institution was a great part of my relationship with her. Thank you, Ohio University, for those things.

**Kenneth Williams, BSISE ’87  
Richmond, Texas**

## ALUMNI POINT OF VIEW

### Settling: not such a bad thing

*In June, this essay by Corinne Colbert, BSJ ’87 and MA ’93, aired as part of National Public Radio’s popular “This I Believe” series. It hit NPR’s most e-mailed features list within 15 minutes. Inspired by a 1950s radio show hosted by acclaimed journalist Edward R. Murrow, the series engages people in writing, sharing and discussing the core values and beliefs that guide their lives. To hear Colbert deliver the essay she recorded at WOUB studios, visit [www.ohio.edu/ohiotoday/](http://www.ohio.edu/ohiotoday/).*

My husband is not my best friend. He doesn’t complete me. In fact, he can be a self-absorbed jerk. We’re nearly polar opposites: He’s a lifetime member of the NRA who doesn’t care for journalists, and I’m a lifelong liberal with a journalism degree. On the other hand, he doesn’t beat or emotionally abuse me. He doesn’t drink or chase other women. He’s a good provider. So I’m sticking with him. Some people would call that “settling,” like it’s a bad thing. But I believe in settling.



The Random House Unabridged Dictionary defines “to settle” as “to place in a desired state or order; to quiet, calm, or bring to rest; to make stable.” In short, it means that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Alas, too many of us buy into a different adage: that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. From movies to magazines to commercials, we’re told we should demand more from lives that are, for many of us, pretty good. We’re supposed to look better, eat better, find better jobs, be better lovers and parents and workers. A stable marriage isn’t enough; it’s supposed to be a fairy tale. Perfection is the goal.

But at what cost? Would I really be any happier if I took up yoga and ate more soy? If my spouse wasn’t just my partner, but my soulmate? I doubt it.

Settling, in my sense, is about acceptance. I’m a pretty

happy person, in large part because I’m honest with myself about what I have. My body isn’t bikini-worthy, but it’s healthy. I’ll never write for *Rolling Stone* as I once dreamed, but I am making a living as a writer. I yell at my sons and let them play too much GameCube, but I’m still a good mom.



Of course, some situations are worth improving. If your weight jeopardizes your health, exercise and change your eating habits. If your job makes you truly miserable, find a new one. If your marriage is toxic, end it. Chances are, though, you probably have what you need: a roof over your head, food on the table, a job that pays the bills, and family and friends. If you’re unhappy, ask yourself: Am I unhappy because I really don’t have what I need, or because I just want more?

So yes, I’m settling. Sure, I wish my husband would kiss me more often, tell me he loves me every day and get as excited about my accomplishments as I do. Emptying the dishwasher without being asked and giving me unsolicited foot massages wouldn’t hurt, either.

All that would be nice, but it’s not necessary. I’m happy with my husband who, despite his flaws, is a caring father, capable of acts of stunning generosity and fiercely protective of his family. Thinking about him may not set me on fire as it used to, but after 17 years and two kids, our love is still warm. And I believe that’s good enough.

## Happy to see Hostetler

My husband, Charles, and I are '52 graduates of Ohio University. Charles took many ceramics courses from Dave Hostetler and after graduation went back to OU to work with Dave during the year.

Over the many years, we have lost contact with Dave and have wondered about him numerous times. When the spring edition of *Ohio Today* came, we were thrilled to see the article about Dave. We immediately started remembering the good times years ago at OU and in the ceramics department. Even the mention of Pappy Mitchell brought back fond memories.

**Joan Ruth Welton, BFA '52  
Sandusky, Ohio**

## Sports cuts disappointing

I was shocked and disappointed at the announcement in *Ohio Today* about four sports being dropped from varsity status. The decision is questionable and certainly will provide a few nails in the coffin of interscholastic sports at the university.

Three of those were men's sports and the fourth was a women's sport. Title IX is one of the worst programs ever created — pure social tinkering. Ohio U.'s competitiveness in the major sports has not been a shining light in recent decades, and now there are even fewer opportunities in the name of the university to compete for nonathletic students through sports interaction and notoriety.

The university should be competing on all fronts.

**David A. Miller, BA '60  
Arlington, Texas**

## Write to us

**Ohio Today welcomes your letters. We reserve the right to edit for grammar, space, clarity, style and civility. Please include your Ohio University affiliation, address and phone number in case we have questions.**

**Some ways to share your letters:**

- Send e-mail to [ohiotoday@ohio.edu](mailto:ohiotoday@ohio.edu)
- Address mail to:  
**Ohio Today  
Scott Quad 173  
Ohio University  
Athens, Ohio 45701-2979**
- Fax letters to 740-593-1887

*The Ohio University community was saddened in late September by the loss of Associate Professor of History Phillip Bebb, who was killed at his Athens home. As a specialist in the Italian Renaissance, he introduced thousands of students to European history through introductory courses, classes on the Renaissance and Reformation, and his favorite class, "The Age of Michelangelo." For information on a scholarship fund that has been established in Bebb's honor and links to other sources of information, visit [www.ohio.edu/ohiotoday/](http://www.ohio.edu/ohiotoday/). — Eds.*

## A pedagogical paragon ...

If ever I have known a person for whom the word "jolly" was invented, it was Professor Phillip N. Bebb.

He was a funny, generous and smart man — not necessarily in that order, but that is the order in which I remember him best.



I took graduate classes with him during the mid-1990s, and over the past dozen or so years, no matter where I have seen him or under what circumstances, he

has always hailed me with a big, booming "WILLIAM!!! You still owe me that Erasmus paper!"

I always smiled immediately, recalling how passionately he spoke to us about Reformation and Renaissance history, all the while making us chuckle about everything from Michelangelo's issues with the Pope to Martin Luther's issues with lightning and bowel movements to Savonarola's issues with everything and everybody.

Professor Bebb wasn't comfortable preaching at us from the front of a classroom, so my graduate seminar classmates and I did most of our chuckling — and some considerable learning, by the way — around a table in the Front Room in old Baker Center over danish and beverages, which he sprang for every week.

It's impossible to completely capture another teacher's pedagogical style in front of one's own classes, but if my own freshman students are enjoying an infusion of passion and humor in some of the things that I am trying to get across to them, there's undoubtedly a good deal of Phil Bebb in what I am doing.

**Bill Kimok  
University archivist and instructor  
Athens, Ohio**

## ... and adviser extraordinaire

I was deeply saddened to learn of the death of Phillip Bebb. While I was in the Honors Tutorial College (1993–1997), Phil was director of studies in history, a position I was astonished to learn later he held for more than 30 years. He was a devoted and honorable teacher.

Like most HTC history majors, I met Phil Bebb as a senior in high school when I came down to interview. Phil met me at his office dressed in a lumpy sweater, cords, woolly socks and sandals. It was instantly disarming. His personality matched his appearance. He was welcoming, kindly and relaxed, but every bit the scholar. This was not so much an interview as a conversation, and it contributed a great deal toward my decision to come to Ohio University.

From the first-quarter tutorial in European history on, Phil was exactly what college advisers are supposed to be: simultaneously a mentor, a friend and an advocate. He was always there to talk about what to take (and what not to take) and to find out whether I needed any help. I'll never forget his honesty and frankness, a sign of the respect he gave to his students. He did not limit, constrain or shape what we tutees were to do — we did that ourselves. But he removed the barriers and administrative hassles so as to make it possible for us to find our own path on campus and in life.

Phil shaped the lives of so many OU students, both in the Honors Tutorial College and beyond. Ten years on, I am filled with everlasting regret that I did not send him that last e-mail, the one that would have told him I'd come back to Ohio with a family and a career, to do as he did at a university. I know he would have been happy to hear of it, and he would have smiled that toothy grin I first saw many years ago.

**Jonathan Reed Winkler, BA '97  
Assistant professor of history  
Wright State University  
Dayton, Ohio**