

Never be so narrow as to lose sight of the big picture – words that resonate deeply within my soul over three decades after my mentor and advisor, [Dr. Eugene Evonuk](#) presented a lecture on homeostasis. From 1967-1984, Dr. Evonuk was Professor and Director of the Laboratory of Applied Physiology at Oregon. I feel more than blessed to have been one of his doctoral students. Just after I completed my degree, I assumed his role in an emergency position teaching graduate physiology – when he died of a sudden heart attack a few days after returning from a trip with the People to People Medical Education Delegation to China. Dr. Evonuk was a walking medical dictionary – a demanding teacher with an infectious curiosity and love for nature and life. Though he was trained in cardiovascular and environmental physiology at Iowa College of Medicine, he was a master physiologist in dozens of areas at multiple levels of organization. He could converse fluently with virtually any scientist – physicists, biochemists and medical professionals – in any area of research or clinical practice, yet he did so with an unusual sense of awe and humility. *You must take risks, push the envelope, and fail first in order to learn! Seek to integrate knowledge from all walks of life.* Dr. Evonuk's fascination with every facet of the living world propelled him to explore it to the extremes. He was an inordinate risk-taker who tracked wolves in Alaska and survived his sea plane crashing three times. Graduate students were initiated with plane rides and trips to the Vets' Club! His many adventures and subtle humor provided tantalizing material for his colorful physiology lectures. Dr. Evonuk mentored us with incredible enthusiasm, remarkable wisdom and dedication, but most of all with selfless devotion and love. Each of us sought to emulate Dr. Evonuk because he was our true life hero. We could accomplish anything when he was by our side! Together with my mother, Jean Van Landingham; father, Nicholas Lombardi; and close mentor and colleague, Milt Davis; there is no one on this earth who has made more of a profound impact on my life than Dr. Evonuk. My goal in teaching has been quite simple –predestined by early educational experiences – to pass on to others what was instilled in me by superlative role models.

From 1984 to 1985, I taught graduate physiology courses with labs at Oregon and directed the Applied Physiology Lab. In 1985, when Professor John Postlethwait was planning a sabbatical, I was approached by then Biology Department Chair, Roderick Capaldi, about teaching introductory human physiology. A year earlier, Dr. Capaldi graciously had offered to let me use his lab equipment to help study the enzyme lactate dehydrogenase. I have been teaching for the Biology Department since Dr. Capaldi first opened the door for me. I have taught many [lecture and laboratory courses](#), but primarily [introductory human physiology](#), [medical physiology](#), and occasionally [special interest freshman seminars](#) through 1st yr program grants.

Dr. Evonuk stressed that in order to improve in teaching, it was crucial to conduct research and work directly with students in the lab. *OK, good, good – you put it on paper! Now, learn by doing!* Whether lecture, lab or research project, I have tried to work together with students to be as interactive and creative as possible in making textbook knowledge and the most current research come alive through practical application in daily life. Though my official job descriptions have been for teaching and advising, I have sought to conduct [research](#) and to attend yearly [national and international meetings](#) striving to become a more well-informed teacher. What is most exciting and fulfilling to me is to share immediately what I have learned in the hope of making some small difference. The beauty of my unique job has been that I have received infinitely more than I have given, because I have learned something new and exciting in a variety of fields each and every day. For over 25 yr, it has been my overwhelming joy, deep privilege and honor to work directly with several thousand students and colleagues at the University of Oregon, and members of the Eugene community – a time that remarkably has been seamless with my incredible experiences with Dr. Evonuk. I hope in some small way that I have passed on the many gifts instilled in me – enthusiasm, infectious curiosity, a deep love for learning, an awe of nature – and that I may continue to be blessed for many years to come with the opportunity to engage in the remarkable study of life.