



CLOUD GAMBLE/GUILFORDIAN

**Doug Gilmer** (left) was honored by friends and colleagues on Jan. 30. Gilmer worked for Guilford's dining services for 46 years.

## Doug Gilmer retires after 46 years of service

By Deena Zaru  
SENIOR WRITER

"Doug represents what the world should be," said Senida Kuljuh. "He has gone through a lot of hardships, but he is a living legend of being the change that he would want to see in the world. He has changed a lot of people's lives in the community."

After 46 years of working in dining services, Doug Gilmer spent his last day as an employee at Guilford on Jan. 30. That day the Guilford community got together in the dining hall to honor Gilmer for his work and his friendship and to remind him of how much he will be missed.

In 2005 Gilmer received the Charlie Hendricks '40 Distinguished Service Award from the Alumni Association, which recognizes people for prolonged and distinguished service to the college.

The cafeteria was completely full as students, former and current faculty, staff, administration members, family and friends of Doug Gilmer gathered in the dining hall.

At the ceremony Gilmer sat with family including his wife Carolyn at the front of the room, as many shared memories of Gilmer and reflected on how he has influenced their lives.

Sophomore Juliet Carrington recalled last winter when she was in financial trouble and Gilmer offered to buy her ticket home to Maine.

"The amount you've given to people, if people could give it back to you, you'd be a millionaire," Carrington said, addressing Gilmer. "You'd live in a mansion. Because you just give so much and never ask for anything in return."

Senida Kuljuh has known Gilmer since 2002 when she came to Guilford as a student and began working with him in the dining hall in 2003.

"He was very welcoming when we met. He wanted to know my story," said Kuljuh. "Doug is always interested in where people come from. I was glad to have someone wanting to hear my story. Doug is an active listener and he is open-minded."

Kuljuh said that these quali-

ties make Gilmer a good problem-solver.

"If you ever have an issue or a problem, Doug will listen to you and then help you see all the possibilities," said Kuljuh. "He would show you all the ways that you can solve it and no matter what he would guide you through whatever you are going through."

Lisa Harris who has worked in the dining hall for 21 years said that she will miss Doug's "friendship" most of all.

"Even though I am just as old as he is, Doug is like a father figure to me maybe because my father also worked here," said Harris. "I will miss having someone to talk to, someone who will listen to me and I will miss hearing Doug sing. I love to hear him sing. He won't sing in front of you but he has the most beautiful voice. He could have been famous."

Kuljuh said that to her Doug Gilmer is not only a colleague, but she also considers him a father.

"I would be very honored to call Doug my father," said Kuljuh. "He is always there for

me and for my son Josh and for my husband. He is family."

Tina Gilmer, Doug's sister, has worked in the dining hall for about 31 years.

Gilmer said that she has six brothers but that she has a special relationship with Doug.

"Doug would take care of me," said Gilmer. "When we go somewhere I have nothing to worry about because he and his wife would take care of me."

She said that even though she will miss working with Gilmer, it is best that he retires.

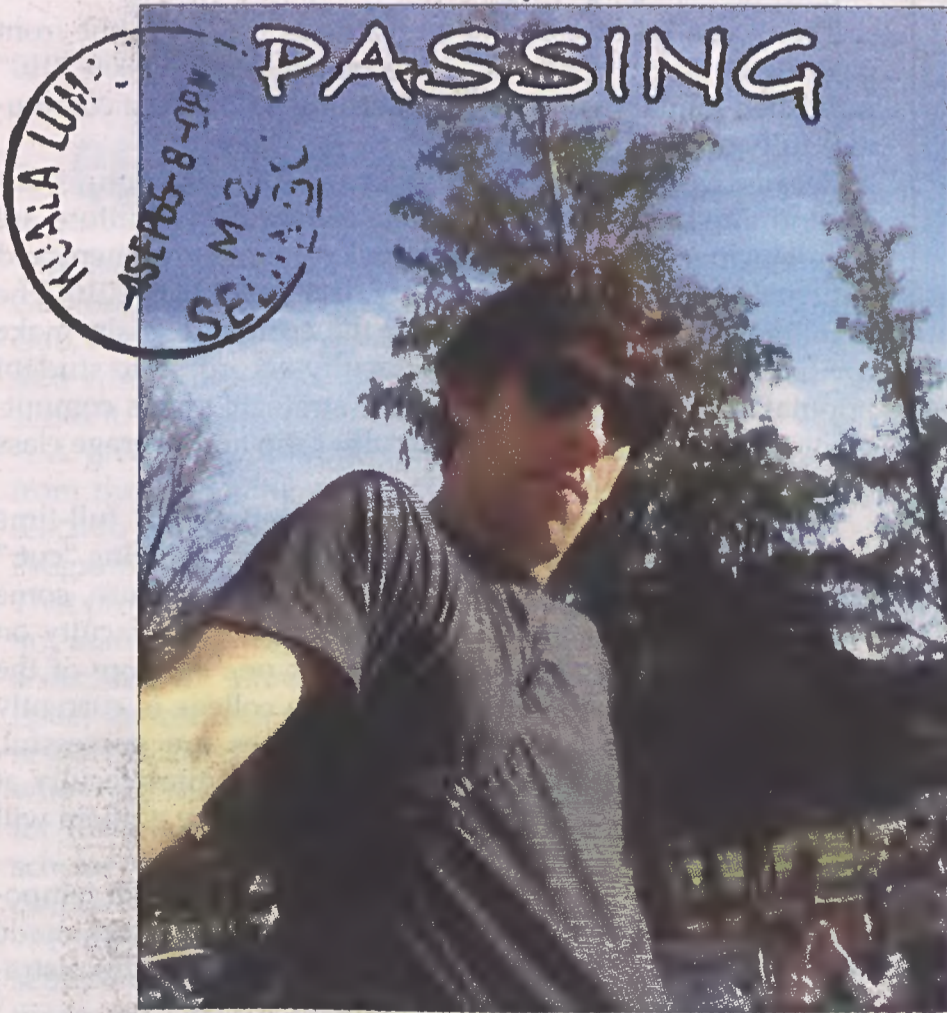
"I think it's best for Doug after being here for so long," said Gilmer. "I want him to get the respect he deserves and to rest. God might have better plans for him."

Instead of making a speech Gilmer gave his prepared message for former staff member Ellen Parker to read.

In the message Gilmer thanks all of the students, faculty and staff members for their well wishes.

"If I could just say one thing as I leave, it would be to remind everyone that it's all about the students," he wrote.

## A PILGRIM IN PASSING



### "Anticipation"

Armed with little more than a backpack, camera, computer and bandanna, Maxwell George, former Layout Editor for The Guilfordian, is spending the spring semester traveling by train throughout Europe. Under the title "A Pilgrim in Passing," he hopes to find some sense of the sacred in each stop along

the way. Look here each week for a new anecdote from the road. To see Max's intended itinerary and photos from the trip, and to share your own feedback on the journey, check out Guilfordian.com. For more frequent dispatches and a more direct connection to Max, hit up his blog at mbgineurope.tumblr.com.

Half-way through my 16th consecutive year of school, you could say I've been busy dying for most of my life. My years aren't organized in seasons or months or lunar cycles, but in quarters and semesters and oddly placed breaks. My days have been fractioned into meaningless blocks of imaginary time like "recess" and "B-lunch" and "community time."

That's why I'm leaving tomorrow. I'm going to get on a plane and fly away to London where I will begin my travels (and studies) across Central and Western Europe and, eventually, in China. It's alright, Ma, I can make it.

The anticipation of travel, I'm told, is an essential element of the every journey. It is the mind's preparation on the eve of chaos, an immersion in the unfamiliar that is travel. For three months I've been consumed by unstable anticipation, like a kid before Christmas, irresistibly excited to uncover the treasures that had so taunted me from behind their kitschy wrapping paper masks, yet worried, what if Santa didn't get my list or confused my years-worth of good behavior with some other punk, placing me on the naughty list instead? Now it's seemingly more rational; there's the obvious excitement for my intended plans – more than a dozen countries in four months – and the apprehension of the unknown and the uncontrollable.

But the anticipation is unglamorous – and writing about it?

I hear there is a level of hell reserved for fools like me. It's the writing about travel after the fact – posthumously, you might say – that has captured the attention of famous writers and popular audiences, historically. And for good reason. As Alain de Botton discusses in *The Art of Travel*, memory is selective and fragmented and, like a master painter, a good travel writer employs the inevitable process of selection in their retellings. Yet here I am, attempting to write about what hasn't yet occurred – and write sensibly at that. This, I suppose, is an act of pre-telling. Stay with me, there's a point coming somewhere here...

While abroad this semester I will be enrolled as a "half-time student" at Guilford taking eight-credits-worth of independent studies with some of my favorite professors – technically I am registered as, get this, a student living off campus. The central focus of my studies will be experiential travel writing and pilgrimage sites fieldwork, the former involving reading and writing about the places I visit and my experiences, the latter involving a makeshift tour of various pilgrimage destinations – Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain, for example – and other hallowed locales – The Louvre in Paris or St. James's Gate in Dublin. Although the details of my studies are not of particular interest to you and may never find their way into this column in the coming weeks, I must take

a brief aside here to applaud this institution which has enabled me to, essentially, invent my own study abroad program, proving yet again that here at Guilford if you can dream it, there are many people around that will eagerly help you do it.

In my preparation for these studies I came to realize that my impending trip will be, in so many ways, my own pilgrimage, primarily in the sense that I am seeking personal spiritual knowledge. Exploring this thought further in the smaller hours of a warm winter night in Charlotte, my home away from Guilford, I now see this journey as a series of small pilgrimages. Here in the states it really is easy to see without looking too far, that not much is really sacred. But maybe once I leave, if I may wax poetic for a moment, I will realize the spiritual in someone else's mundane. Perhaps I will find a long lost piece of my soul in Mona Lisa's smile or taste the essence of my own existence in a fresh Guinness at its original Dublin brewery – I promise less metaphor and more drunken description when the time comes.

It hasn't been easy to say goodbye and I'm not really sure if there's a good way to leave best friends behind. So, I say "I'll see you soon." And I mean it. I need this break. For the first time in a long time, I'll be busy being born.

If you're reading this, I'm missing you.