

# RowanAdvances

A PUBLICATION OF ROWAN UNIVERSITY'S ADVANCEMENT DIVISION

WINTER/SPRING 2018



## Love for Rowan faculty continues

Dr. Denis Mercier says Rowan couldn't have come back into his life at a better time. Last year, the 75-year-old retired professor said "for no apparent reason other than his own thinking," he decided it was time to get some affairs in order.

So when the idea to support faculty development was brought to the table, he couldn't have been more thrilled.

"I was five feet off the ground!" Mercier exclaimed. "I was always trying to get out and represent the University when I was there, so I really saw something in this idea."

The Denis Mercier Endowed Professional Development Fund was established to support faculty members within the College of Communication & Creative Arts (CCCA) in professional development endeavors.

During his 35-year career as a writing and mass media professor at Rowan, Mercier self-financed some of the department's costs because he was so passionate about his work and that of his colleagues.

"It was nothing crazy," he said, "but when we needed faculty development items like a new computer and

new software or funding for a trip, my wife at the time and I were able to absorb any finances the college couldn't provide, and we were happy to do it."

Mercier loved getting the University's name out into the greater academic world, traveling all over the country and even into Canada. He wrote papers, presented his work, chaired panels and participated in various conferences, furthering his knowledge of mass media and popular culture while working to put Rowan's communication faculty on the map.

"We started getting mentioned in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*," said Mercier. "I had always thought the teachers were head and shoulders—and whole bodies—ahead of everyone else. The communication faculty were not only good at what they did, but they practiced what they did, and that's something special you can't overlook."

Dean of the College of Communication & Creative Arts Dr. Sanford Tweedie was overwhelmingly supportive of Mercier's fund to support faculty and instrumental in getting the initiative started. "Mercier's support expands opportunities for faculty to develop as teachers, researchers and artists," said Tweedie. "And we are deeply appreciative that Denis created an endowed fund, which will continue to provide more opportunities in the future."

Katherine Budris and Tim Zatzariny, Jr. '94, M'07, both CCCA writing instructors, are the first two recipients of The Denis Mercier Endowed Professional Development Fund and recently attended The Association of Writers and Writers Programs conference in Tampa, Florida. "After all these years," said Zatzariny, a former student of Mercier's, "he's still helping me."