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A believer in student potential, Thompson retires after 38 years

By Paul Scozzari
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In all the positions he's held at this campus, Dick Thompson has said his favorite part of the job has always been dealing with the students, and all it takes is a look around his office to realize how much he believes that.

After 38 years at SVSU, the former admissions representative, assistant registrar, registrar, director of admissions, dean of students, and university ombudsman is retiring from SVSU. Not bad for a man who started off as a part-time college student with initial plans for a degree in engineering.

The youngest child in the family, Thompson was enrolled part time at Ferris State, commuting to classes in order to stay at home and help out his mother financially. Once his oldest brother returned home, Thompson enrolled full time at the college, and came upon a realization fairly quickly.

"I made a decision midway through my third year to leave engineering and go into education. I had enough people tell me that I should think about going into teaching or coaching, so I did all that and enjoyed it. Plus, I have a feeling that I would have made a very average engineer."

He traded in his classes in engineering for classes in teaching with an emphasis on business, due to initial uneasiness about his new career choice.

"I wasn't absolutely sure that it



Vanguard photo/James Fry

University Ombudsman Dick Thompson will step down from his job as student mentor after 38 years at SVSU.

was going to be teaching, which is why I went with the business background. I thought I could become a certified teacher, but I took the business route primarily because I was familiar with the subject from high school, but also because I could either go into teaching, or branch off into a whole new field."

After teaching high school math, business, and history courses in Owosso, Thompson started getting anxious to move on and try different things, which led him to SVSU in 1970.

"To be brutally honest, I knew a

few people here, prior to 1970. I had been teaching high school for five years, and I decided maybe I should do something different."

He called his SVSU contacts to see if there was a job opening. Something was bothering him and he thought that the young college might hold the remedy.

"There was no message from God Almighty about what it was, but I was just a little bit antsy. I just knew I should be doing something else."

Thompson credits his decision to

go into teaching, along with his decisions to fulfill the many roles he has held on campus with good timing, even better advice, and having qualified people around to guide him.

"I ended up in education because when I was a young man, someone tapped me on the shoulder and said I should think about doing this or that. I've always been lucky enough to receive good advice, and I never forgot about that. After 45 years in the workforce, you just don't forget, whether it's advice from a teacher, a coach, or a

dean of students.

Making the transition initially from high school to college was easy for Thompson, since his first role at the University was as an admissions representative, helping high school students make the same transition which he himself had just made.

Despite the long list of positions he has held, Thompson was still unable to pick the one which he felt he enjoyed the most.

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CARS

European car hobby drives SVSU student

By Lauren Maceri
THE VALLEY VANGUARD

Many people have a hobby and, with Ben Boyle, it just happens to involve unique European cars.

Boyle, a secondary education English senior, has always been interested in cars. At first, he bought old Volkswagen Beetles, but he decided they weren't "out there" enough.

At 15 years old, Boyle found a car that was more his style - the Citroën 2CV, which he describes as similar to a French Volkswagen, except a little "funkier." 2CV is a French abbreviation of "deux chevaux," or two horses.

Boyle now drives a 1986 Citroën 2CV that was made in France. He had it shipped from Germany to fix up for his own personal use. Boyle replaced the frame with a stronger one that was built in England and he rebuilt the motor. The engine, at two cylinders, is half the size of a Harley Davidson.

The car can cruise at 70 miles per

hour, provided there is no wind and no hills; however, he said, "If you walk, you're still faster than my 2CV."

Boyle does not do the bodywork for his cars, but the car holds some unique features on its own: the doors are thinner than the average textbook and are not wide enough to hold the windows; instead, they are slit in the middle and flip up.

"The thing is just bizarre and I really like it," he said.

The car's suspension was designed so that two farmers could travel through a field with a basket full of eggs and not break any.

"One of the most fascinating things about them is that the world record for highest altitude ever run was from a 2CV," Boyle said.

The models have stayed nearly the same throughout the years and seem to survive through a lot. The main disadvantage the car has is that it's susceptible to rusting quickly and the frame needs replacing often.



Vanguard photo/Matt Shaw

Ben Boyle, a secondary education English senior, says walking is still faster than his two cylinder Citroën 2CV.

There are not many Citroëns in the United States because they were never sold here. Boyle is part of a Citroën group in Ann Arbor where they meet

up twice a year to look at the new models and talk about finding parts, fixing the cars, and socializing. Their Web site is citroenistsofannarbor.com.

"I wish it was more grand than that, but at least it helps to remind me that I'm not the only one in Michigan with a Citroën!"