

DR. HOUGHTALEN TO RETIRE

By Robert J. Houghtalen

If you have heard the rumor that I am retiring, it is true. But let me squelch some of the other rumors. It is not true that I am retiring because I can't imagine working without Dr. Thomas in the department. (See the article on his retirement in this issue of the CE Echoes.) It is not true that the department ran much smoother while I was on sabbatical, or at least not completely true. It is definitely not true that all of the new and much more capable faculty members we have hired in the last seven years participated in a mutiny of older and less capable faculty members. They have too much compassion to jettison Dr. Thomas and myself.

In all seriousness, it is with mixed emotions that I convey to you my intent to retire early from my position as Professor and Head of the Department of Civil Engineering. My 20+ years at Rose-Hulman have been truly enjoyable and fulfilling. I have always appreciated the mission of this school, and in harmony with that mission, I have invested myself into my students with joy and vigor. They are a delight to work with, displaying talent, character, and perseverance each and every day. I will miss them and the environment that molds them into technical innovators, managers, and leaders. I will miss you, our loyal and dedicated alumni who prove to be the fruit of that labor as I witness your personal growth, career achievements, and societal impact.

It has been my privilege serving in the Department of Civil Engineering since I came in 1988, and as the Department Head since 2001. The faculty and staff in this department possess a rare combination of aptitude, collegiality, and dedication that is a microcosm of the school in general. This is a reflection of the unique environment that we call Rose-Hulman, and it is the reason why so few of us leave. It is also what makes this decision a particularly difficult one. I can't imagine working with a finer group of people.

However, it is with excitement that I can share with you the news that Judy and I will be heading back to the Sudan next summer. In response to the great love shown to us by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the many blessings He has bestowed upon us, we would like to show our love to the people of that nation who have so very little. In addition, I would like to keep in contact with as many of you as I can. If you have any interest in that, please drop me an email at your earliest convenience and I will respond in kind.