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YOUNT IS A CLASSIC RENAISSANCE MAN

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Posted: Monday, October 26, 2015 12:00 pm

By Charles Clark, special to Tribune

He's a scholar, a rocker, a philosopher, a teacher, and a former comedian. David Yount is the embodiment of a classic renaissance man.

Yount is a man by many names. To his students at Mesa Community College, he is Dr. Yount or Professor Yount. To the audiences who've seen him perform as part of Struck Match Entertainment he is Dr. Dave. To those who saw him performing stand-up he was the Professor of Comedy. And to his family, friends and colleagues he is simply Dave.

When you meet Yount you're instantly struck by his high-energy and his natural humor that manages to seep into everything he does.

Whether he's teaching his philosophy 101 class,

talking to the audience before his next set or simply telling you a bit about his life growing up, there is sure to be a moment where you are just going to laugh.

It is never a forced joke either; it's always something very natural, as if interacting with an old friend. For instance, Yount said one of the lines that he loves to use when introducing himself at his shows is, "I'm Dr. Dave, I have a Ph.D. in philosophy. Nobody knows what that means, but don't worry. It essentially means that I can enjoy Pink Floyd sober."

He's the kind of person who just naturally draws people in. Sit in his class and it's clear his students like him. They're engaged and eager to discuss the philosophical ideas of the day. His teaching style is one of interaction and openness to the discussion of different ideas.

"To me a horrible teacher is one who gives their views everyday and just rams it down their students throats saying, 'this is the way it is.' Or so boring and not engaging," Yount said.

That's part of the reason that Yount doesn't reveal his own philosophical beliefs to his students until the end of the semester.

His professional colleagues like and respect him. He's part of a culture that exists in the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department at Mesa Community College, a culture that emphasizes collegiality.

"He's a fantastic colleague, a fantastic teacher and a fantastic scholar as well," fellow MCC philosophy professor Debra Campbell said. "He has just a sheer dedication to truth and rationality mixed and tempered with an incredible compassion for other people."

Yount's energy and positive attitude is a part of what drew his Struck Match Entertainment partner Harley "Davidson" Harkins to him.

"He's got this great energy. He has this positive attitude and he's comfortably being himself. He's goofy and he's secure in that," Harkins said.



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• Charles Clark is an honors student at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University.

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