

Nelson Pole



At Cass, I studied Architectural Drawing where I learned to use my hands in that we studied most aspects of house construction and followed up that theory in “labs” where we actually practiced what we studied. Today I am a moderately competent do-it-yourself guy who continues to practice what I started at Cass. I tell my friends that Cass was the perfect preparation to be a middle-class home owner.

Like many others of our classmates, I went to Monteith College at Wayne. There I came to value the generalists’ outlook, studying at issues from multiple points of view and thinking through how a perspective shapes the understanding. Cass was technical, that is, narrow in its focus, while Monteith was broad. The combination made for a powerful education.

At Monteith, I discovered philosophy which became the intellectual passion of my life. Eventually I went on to Ohio State where I earned a PhD in Philosophy. I loved philosophy because it allowed me to focus on any area in which I became interested among which were architecture, sciences, religion, literature, and mathematics. I joined the faculty at Cleveland State University while working on my dissertation. At the end of 2008, I retired from full-time duties as Professor of Philosophy and Director of Liberal Studies. I loved CSU because its urban student body reminded me so much of the kids who attended Cass and Wayne.

At various times in our childhoods, my wife Susan and I lived just a few blocks apart but we did not meet until our Senior year at Monteith. We have now been married for 46 years and have 4 children, all boys. Our oldest son, Alex, is a college professor in Korea. He and his wife Yong Im have twin boys. Number two son William lives on Guam where he is a lawyer on the staff of the territorial Attorney General. Our third son Jesse is a rabbi and Jewish day school teacher in Chicago. He and his wife Rina have 4 children, three girls and one boy. Matthew, number four, lives with us. We live on 7 acres, in the country, outside of Chagrin Falls, a suburb east of Cleveland.



This picture of us was taken in 2008 while we were on the subway in Seoul. On that trip, we found out that Cass is the name of a popular Korean beer. Its slogan is that it is the name of refreshment, the name that a fresh beer makes when its container is opened.



I think that Cass provided me with many wonderful HS experiences but the one that I want to note is having Mr. Sprague for Geometry. He was the old teacher who looked like a bum with a stubble

on his face and a rip in his trousers. He told rotten jokes and made the girls sit on one side of the room and the boys on the other. (Did he understand that doing so magnified sexual tensions rather than minimized them?) He would collect homework and then dump it in the wastebasket at the end of the period where students from the next class could find and copy it. His exams repeated the same questions over and over again as if he had not already asked them of us. In short, he was a joke. But, if you learned the techniques of those repeated proofs, they were the keys to all the others. He really taught how to understand Geometry. From him I learned to not judge a person by their appearance but by the results of their actions. From him I learned that the approach to a discipline is not necessarily founded on its basic assumptions but rather on its basic techniques. I also learned how not to behave in a classroom!