

### At a Glance

**Major**

Political Science

**Immediate Post-Grad Pursuits**

- \_ Started the School for Community Service in 1974
- \_ Public School Teacher

**Current Title**

Science teacher and coach

**Employer**

Friends Central School

**Further Opportunities in Field**

- \_ The Hunger Project
- \_ Teaches at Drexel

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## It's Never Boring Social Change with Douglas Ross '69

Upon entering college, Douglas Ross had plans to become a doctor. Unfortunately, he says, "Organic chemistry was so *boring!*" Had the subject been any more interesting, however, Ross might never have become the ardent community activist that he is today.

Like many college students from his generation, Ross became deeply involved in protest of the Vietnam War. His zeal for activism caused him to drop his plans to be a doctor; he opted instead for a career in community service, graduating with a degree in political science.



Since graduation, Ross has demonstrated great persistence in his pursuit of social justice. In 1974, Ross started the School for Community Service in Philadelphia. This highly progressive school sought to instill in its students the desire to be active in their communities. Moreover, the school urged the students to take themselves seriously. Ross remarks, "All human beings want to do is contribute, yet they feel that they can't do so until age 21. That's terribly frustrating." At Ross' school, however, the students were acknowledged for their community service and, when doing so, he said, "They felt like a million bucks!"

Presently, Ross integrates his passion for activism into his teaching of middle school science at Friends Central. His students have been involved in countless environmental service projects, even creating a walk-in rain forest in their classroom. Ross remains devoted to teaching through immersion, allowing his students to learn through experience. For his creation of the Philadelphia Summer Science Institute, Ross won the Christa McAuliffe award, which is given by the Aerospace Education Foundation to the Pennsylvania teacher who has done exceptional work in a community outside of the classroom.

Ross says of himself, "I'm a stubborn person; I was a wrestler, you know." A decidedly busy bee, he offers his services to the Green School Consortium, the Environmental Science Service Project, and EarthForce of the Delaware Valley. In the summer of 2003, he traveled to Malawi to work with The Hunger Project. This organization, says Ross, is devoted to "the sustainable end of hunger in harmony with nature." In the spare time he has, Ross teaches night classes in science at Drexel University and is an involved member of Radnor Quaker Meeting.

Ross' most recent project is the Bryn Mawr Peace Coalition, an organization he, his wife, Dr. Jerilynn Radcliffe BMC '70, and some friends created to raise local awareness about the reality of war in Iraq. "When Bush agreed to go to war," says Ross, "kids came up to me and said, 'Oh man, are you going to let this thing happen?'" True to form, Douglas Ross has tackled the issue with a wrestler's mentality.

-- Teresa Traxler '05 & Mary van Ogtrop '05