Picking up the phone, I heard the familiar husky voice and knew immediately who was calling. The greeting simply sealed the deal. “Dr. Tuck, how are you?”

Only one person addressed me that way — not surprising, considering I have no Ph.D. But that was classic Tom Trusky. Always looking for ways to equalize the academic playing field and ingratiate himself to those he liked to call his “media handlers.”

When he died in late November after four decades at the university, he left behind a true legacy. His engaging classroom style led to his being named Idaho’s Professor of the Year three times by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education — in 1990, 1991 and 1993.

A professor of English, Tom helped found several publications aimed at encouraging creative writing, including cold-drill and the Ahsahta Press poetry series. He was editor of the Modern and Contemporary Poetry of the West series, director of the Hemingway Western Studies Center, founder and director emeritus of the Idaho Center for the Book, head of the Idaho Film Collection and instrumental in initiating Boise State’s MFA program in creative writing. He also was passionate about silent film star Neil Shipman and Idaho artist James Castle.

But that’s not why I’ll remember him. My memories include Tom installing Burma Shave poetry signs across campus; pushing for an exhibition of poems hung on refrigerators with children’s magnets; waving a pair of red, white and blue boxer shorts while expounding on the merits of recycling underwear into paper; exalting over a box of previously unknown James Castle sketches; and populating my e-mail box with rambling, creative and often irreverent messages.

He was always enthusiastic, he refused to take no for an answer and there were times I dreaded seeing his name pop up on my caller ID. But I never regretted knowing him.

As Richard Young, chair of the Department of Art, noted: “A really bright star is gone from this university.”

**TOM, YOU ARE MISSED.**