

To Whom It May Concern,

As I understand it, there is currently a controversy regarding Dr. Christopher Rollston. I do not wish to address the controversy, but I'd like to tell you what he has done for me, personally.

I had a total of 8 courses with Dr. Rollston while at Emmanuel: OTI (I & II), Islam, Dead Sea Scrolls, 2nd Temple Jewish Literature, Intermediate Hebrew, Sahidic Coptic, and a readings course on Israel and Egypt in Antiquity. To say that he influenced my academic career would be an understatement. These were many of my favorite classes at Emmanuel. They were also some of the most difficult classes that I've ever taken. There were many times when I honestly did not think I could make it in Intermediate Hebrew. Dr. Rollston always pushed me on with both stick and carrot! He demanded much of us, but he was also always very encouraging. He pushed me further than I thought I was capable. For that, I am eternally grateful.

Dr. Rollston's teachings have helped to mold my worldview. While Rollston definitely required us to memorize "secular facts" (such as where each major scholar received his/her Ph.D. and where he/she currently teaches), he also taught us how the biblical texts could be applied in our lives. He frequently told students who were ministers how they could teach the texts in their churches. Two such lectures from OTI stand out to me. One of them concerns the book of Jonah. Dr. Rollston showed us how the "pagan" Gentiles are always portrayed in a positive light in the book and the Hebrew prophet is always portrayed negatively. The final message of Jonah is that all people are God's people. The other lecture concerns the vision that opens the book of Ezekiel. While this vision seems like a product of a disturbed mind, Rollston explained the various images and taught us that the message of the vision is that God is mobile, or as he put, "God has wheels." As a young man that just moved away from his family, friends, and home, this was a comforting message.

Dr. Rollston does not just influence students in the classroom. Some of the most important moments for me at Emmanuel occurred over a cup of coffee in his office. He was always kind, always generous with his time, and always seemed genuinely happy to have a conversation. While he is definitely "professor," he is also "friend."

Finally, I must mention a matter that is very personal to me. In my final semester, I went through an unexpected and unwanted divorce. I was destroyed. I felt like my whole world had shattered. I wasn't sure how I was going to carry on, moreover how I would finish my final semester of seminary. During this very dark period, Dr. Rollston was friend, counselor, and pastor. In one particularly dark week, he contacted me every day to make sure that I was okay. He even gave me his personal cell phone number and told me to call him any time, day or night. Living hours from my family, it was comforting knowing that I had someone like Dr. Rollston to turn to in times of trouble.

Dr. Rollston is a great professor, mentor, and friend. He has had such a positive influence on my life. Emmanuel is privileged to have such a great professor.

Sincerely,
Jeff Morgan