“Joy has made this teacher a child,” says one student, and like a child, this
professor sees no boundary between life and learning. Thrilled at discovery, full of
wonder and energy, this teacher runs on Coca-Cola and nicotine. He finds no normal line
between day and late-night office hours, or between semesters and summers, which offer
a change of continent for his intellectual work but no change in substance. Neither is
there a wall between scholarship and teaching, no division between the several
disciplines covered by this professor’s courses that address language, art, culture, and
history. Like so many gifted pedagogues at Davidson College, this teacher’s scholarly
passion manifests itself in every class and for every student. “I never would have taken
the class if I had not had to meet the core requirement”—wrote a student who is pursuing
a PhD in this professor’s field. “Of [those] of us in that class, almost all took the next,
and the next . . . and the next.

Unassuming, “generous,” “patient,” “modest,” “respectful”; a “mentor,” a
“friend” he is called; striding tall, leaning his head—topped in his trademark hat—down
ever so slightly, this teacher is a known story teller, one who will drop nearly anything to
tell a tale. The stories get told sitting on the back steps of Chambers, under the blazing
Mediterranean sun, and poring over sources in the library. They get told again by his
students as they in turn teach their own students.

A scholar who first wrote about death--the burial practices of prehistoric
Cypriotes--he has been returning history to life for years by digging it up. The past comes
alive for his students in classes on Greek language, Greek and Roman art and
architecture, and in the little village of Athienou, where he, his students and colleagues return each summer, to dig, seek, and find: a coin, terracotta figurines, statuettes, graves, wells, shards, and bones—all spanning three millennia. He has given impromptu lectures while lying on his back in an ancient stone coffin. Like the village and the archeological site he has developed in his native Cyprus, rich in its variety and constant in its presence, Professor Michael K. Toumazou loves to teach all those who come to him. We honor him today with the Hunter-Hamilton Love of Teaching Award.