Academic Advisor, Adjunct Instructor, Orchid Professor, Veteran. Steve Miciak, M.A.Ed., seems to do it all, and now is also one of the top junior college professors of 2011-2012.

Each year RateMyProfessors.com, the largest online destination for professor ratings, compiles a list of the top professors based on student ratings. Steve was honored as #24 in the top 25 Junior College division in the nation, with top ratings of 4.9 out of 5.

Here’s what students had to say about Steve:

“Mr. Miciak is the best college professor there is. He is funny, kind, very helpful in every way.”

“What a great teacher! He’s funny and makes you want to come to class.”

“What passion—what desire for his students to succeed in college! I love this guy, he made my first college experience AWESOME! Thanks, Mr. Miciak—you’re the best!”

Steve’s passion for students goes beyond his daily responsibilities advising veterans at the Dale Mabry Campus. He is an adjunct instructor that takes pride in helping students see beyond their own expectations and embrace their full potential. Pictured above with his bride of almost 25 years, he is also quite an artist! His work with mosaic tiles was featured at the Faculty and Staff Exhibit at Gallery 221.

If you ask Steve about what it means to receive such recognition, he humbly believes that he simply just treats students with care and respect.

Here’s a few of the questions we asked Steve, who shared, “I am humbled and flattered by this honor.”
What do you love most about teaching?

I love giving back! I love staying current with the younger generation. My first experiences with college back in the 1970’s at Broward Community College (BCC) were a total failure and it changed my life. My road to success took much longer and it was much harder to achieve. I don’t want my experiences with the “school of hard knocks” to be repeated by my students. Being a retired Navy Chief Petty Officer and having travelled around the world three times, I’ve gained a tremendous amount of life experiences and I love sharing them with my students. I don’t sugar coat the real world and they respect my honesty and my demand for accountability from them. We also have a tremendous amount of fun in my classroom, which is not easily forgotten by them.

What fuels your passion in helping students in the classroom as well as through the work you do in Veteran’s Affairs?

Throughout my military career I helped Sailors succeed. It’s my job as a CHIEF. I truly LOVE (LOVE) seeing the lights turn on and students and Veterans understanding the importance of education. I push that principle over and over again not only in the classroom but in the Veterans Center. Without an education, all the experience and wisdom in the world won’t equate to true success. As a Veteran, it is my duty and obligation to help those who come after me. Both of my degrees, my BS and MA ED were through the GI Bill and Tuition Assistant (TA). I’ve been there, and done that and want their experiences to be much easier than mine was. If I can help at least one Veteran and at least one student a day, I’m happy. Sure, I would love to see all of them succeed, but sadly, many must also travel that difficult road to success.

What is the most important life lesson you wish you could teach all your students?

To follow their dreams and desires! As I tell my students; we all will work the majority of our lives. Why not do something that excites you and that you’re passionate about in life? If you do that, is it really a job? I want my students to jump out of bed just as I do when I know I’m teaching that day. I love to teach and wish I could teach College Success full time. Sadly, my present position forces me to teach only one class this semester. College Success is one of the greatest tools available to our student population and I would love to see it gain the same importance as other core curriculum at HCC. It should be a mandatory course!

As part of the HCC Community, we extend our congratulations to Steve!

Thanks for sharing the vision of reaching students at all phases of their academic journey—in and out of the classroom.