

At one point during Shankweiler's time as a Biology professor, the Dean of Academics required professors to submit a copy of their exams before administering them. Dr. Shankweiler disagreed with this practice as he felt it was more for high school students. When he had an exam on the anatomy of a cat, he brought the dead cat to the dean's office in a plastic bag and put it on the dean's desk to protest the policy.

John Victor Shankweiler was born on July 22nd 1894 in Berks County, Pennsylvania.

He got his Bachelor of Science from Muhlenberg and then received his graduate degree from Cornell University in 1924. Shankweiler was heavily involved in Muhlenberg's Phi Kappa Tau and spent 3 years participating in track and basketball. He became a Biology instructor in 1921.

Shankweiler spent forty-three years serving Muhlenberg. He was highly beloved and respected. He was often called "Shank" or "Doc" and was an important part of Muhlenberg's Biology department as well as the community.

Many thought of Shankweiler as an amazing academic but also an incredible friend. Because of his active work towards the advancement of the sciences and his quality of teaching, Shank's opinion was highly respected.

"Doc" wanted his students to be successful in the medical field; thus, he founded the Pre-medical Society to provide them with experiences in the medical field as they gained insight from medical professionals.

Shank has been reported to be a quiet individual; however, his quiet character did not stop him being supportive of his students.

He was patient and would often "stay late in the lab to assist students who need extra help; he even personally drove students to medical school interviews." Shank's wife Lelah would invite students to their home and often bake cookies for them.

Shank gained notoriety when he placed the dead cat on the Dean of Academics desk. However, this incident is not what made Shank known throughout Muhlenberg. He was a distinguished professor known for recommending students to medical schools.

A student of his, Hub Bury, class of 1935, proclaims that if Doc recommended any student, they would, without a doubt, get into medical school. Bury appreciated Doc's athletic tennis ability, but it was the supportive, relentless caring qualities that made Doc his favorite professor.

"Mr. Shankweiler is a man who will do his best to help anybody, and no student taking any of his courses lacks assistance. He is sincere in his work, and unfailing efforts have done much to bring the biology department to its present standing" (1926 Ciarla).