Remember being a Pace student and maybe feeling the need for a little guidance? To whom did you turn to talk about researching a paper, deciding on a major, or figuring out your career path? Who was there for you? Maybe it was a fellow student, or maybe a staff member at Pace. Or, very likely, it was a professor.

Ever since Pace & Pace opened its doors in 1906 to a small class of 10 men and 3 women seeking practical instruction in accounting, Pace University has endeavored to be student-centered. Delving into the lives of a small, representative group of students and alumni and the professors who influenced them most, we discovered many inspiring examples of assistance and support from faculty that created opportunities for one student at a time.

**The Accidental Professor**

On a blustery day in 1994, Eli Tilevich ’97 slipped on a patch of ice in front of Lincoln Center. He fractured his wrist, and his career as a clarinetist came to an end. His physical therapist’s office was near Pace University, so one day he ventured over to the admissions office. Tilevich thought, “Everyone’s talking about computers, maybe I can do computer science too.”

With the help of Professor Emerita of Computer Science Carol Wolf, PhD, and Professor of Computer Science Joseph Bergin, PhD, Tilevich completed his undergraduate degree in three years. “I was nervous, didn’t know the lingo, had never played computer games,” says Tilevich.

Luckily, he had Professor Wolf, whom he calls a “virtuoso teacher.” From her he gained a strong foundation in his new discipline. So much so, Wolf says with a chuckle, that occasionally Tilevich would correct her in class, “but he was always polite about it,” she says. She carefully advised him in his course selections so that he could advance quickly. “We realized early on that Eli was exceptional,” says Wolf. Tilevich distinguished himself when his ambitious capstone research project—a computer program that automatically translates C++ into Java—was accepted into the free software library project at MIT.

Says Bergin, “We recognized Eli’s ability and just threw everything at him, and he absorbed it. In my opinion, as a professor, if none of my students go farther than I did, then I’m not doing my job.” Bergin wrote glowing recommendation letters for Tilevich and shared them with the student. Reading them bolstered Tilevich’s confidence, which helped him get into Georgia Tech’s doctoral program.

Today, Tilevich is an assistant professor of computer science at Virginia Tech, where he says he tries to emulate his Pace professors. “It takes longer to prepare for class,” he says, “but it’s worth it.”