

Glencoe Study Center

DOSSIER

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WHO OWNS THE BUSINESS

Dr. Robert Boone

WHO FOUNDED THE BUSINESS, AND WHY?

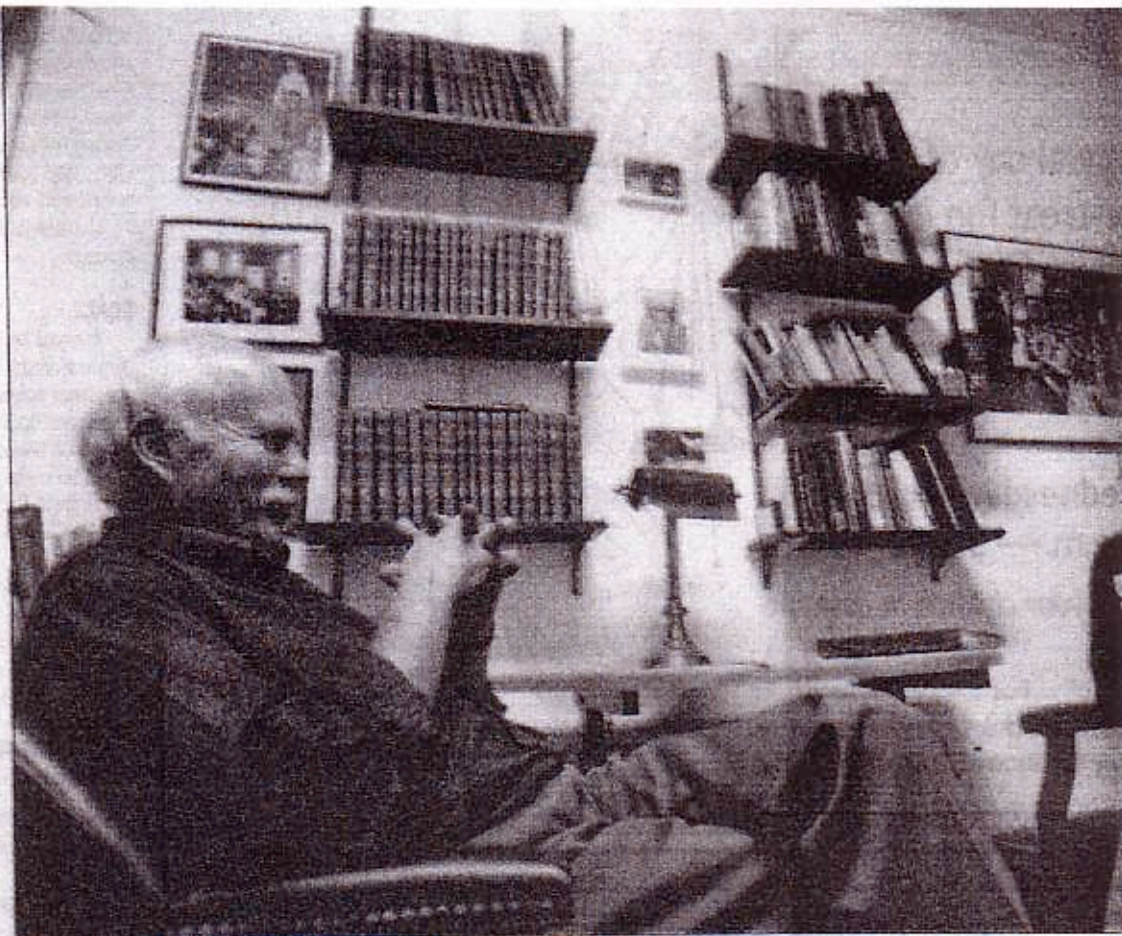
Dr. Robert Boone. Originally this was to be a learning center for helping high school dropouts prepare for the GED. After leaving Highland Park High School, I wanted to work with students who had failed in the traditional system. Soon I added ACT and SAT preparation, first one-on-one and then in classes. Many other teachers soon joined me.

WHEN WAS YOUR BUSINESS ESTABLISHED? IS THE OWNER STILL ACTIVE?

It started in 1976. I am still the owner and director. Through the years dozens and dozens of teachers have helped teach the classes or offered their own programs.

NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:

My daughter, Fanny Zeddies, works for me full time. She handles all of the communication. She keeps things going and helps develop new projects. At present she is working on a project we have started with the Chicago History Museum. She prepares the packets for the classes and calls the students. In the best sense of the word, she manages the office. I still have contact with Jay Amberg, a Glenbrook South teacher and former HPHS colleague, who helped me build the ACT/SAT classes and write a book. Janice Dreis and Larry Rehage, two retired NT teachers, now share the office space. They are setting up their own independent school/student programs. We will collaborate.



Dr. Robert Boone talks with Ann DeLattes, an Oakton Community College student, during a tutoring session at the Glencoe Study Center — Allison Williams/Staff Photographer

Through the years, teachers like Ken Schlichter have used the space for tutoring and teaching classes

TELL US ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS

I still offer GED preparation. Right now a student from Ethiopia is getting ready for the test. Much of my work/teaching is done in the city. I have a twice-weekly program near Marquette Park.

TEACHING WHAT?

ACT/SAT - This is what the Glencoe Study Center is probably most known for. It started with tutoring. Then, in the early 80s, with the help of Jay Amberg, I started offering classes. By the end of the 80's we were teaching more than one thousand young people each year.

In 1990, New Trier High School asked me to work with seniors who were struggling with school. Since then more than 200 young people have worked with me at the Study Center. Along with completing assigned work they must hold a job in order to graduate.

Writing Classes - From the beginning we have offered creative writing. I have taught workshops all over the city. Young Chicago Authors. Currently I am offering story writing, a seminar at Walter Payton HS and memoir

classes here and in the city.

WHY DID YOU START YOUR BUSINESS?

I wanted to work with students who were not doing well in the 'standard' school system. The GED seemed one of the best way to do this. I still work with these students, but I have added many programs.

MISSION

This is a "Study" center for students of all ages, who are here for a variety of reasons. Here's what it can look like: One day last spring, I was helping someone with the ACTs: while another student was at the computer researching the life of Cesar, Chavez. Two girls were writing a play for New Trier senior project. My daughter was at her desk writing study material for the Chicago History Museum. Larry Rehage and Janice Dreis were preparing for a conference in which they would be discussing a leadership program. Later that afternoon a student from Ethiopia stopped in to work on the GED. That night I held a memoir class while another tutor, who leases space, worked with one of his students.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO GET UP AND RUNNING? OBSTACLES?

It took five years. We wanted to stay small enough to get to know the students. This was a challenge because we were getting so many requests. This, of course, was a good problem. Also how could we grow in such a small space. The answer was to rent whenever necessary. We held classes at the Glencoe Community Center, the Glencoe Public Library, and the book store. We also held classes at schools in the city. The business outside the student center grew all through the 80s. This includes request from schools in the city for ACT work. It also included with athletic organizations that wanted us to help athletes score high enough to earn a a scholarship.

PARTNERS?

Jay Amberg was my principal partner for the first twenty years. He and I still work together, although he spends more time with his own writing. He teaches the classes at Loyola and St. Ignatius. Mark Larson, a teacher at Highland Park, has been my writing partner recently. Larry Rehage and Janice Dreis have joined me in several projects. We plan several others, including Gap Year Counseling.

ADVICE

No direct advice, although I certainly observed what other small business people were doing. It was clear that what I had started would grow only if I took it seriously as a business. I needed to raise some money, to advertise, and to come up with new services that could keep the business going.

GOALS

I want to keep the place going. Mark Larson and several younger teachers will take over some of the work. I'll want to help Larry Rehage and Janice Dreis start a GAP Counseling programing. I'll would like to do several more adult classes. I want to keep Jump Start going. Others school have contacted me about that.

WHY LOCATE IN GLENCOE

I live in Glencoe. I

knew this would be close to many high schools and kids.

ANYTHING HUMOROUS HAPPEN?

Once during a (full) practice test for over a hundred of kids at the Community Center, I read the answers for the wrong test. I don't need to tell you what happened. A GED student arrived in class with a snake on his shoulder. I printed up a poster advertising "TEST PREPERATION"

BEST YEARS?

We had the most business in the 80s and early 90s. As I got more involved in Young Chicago Authors, the business here was not as great but it has been steady. I expect the people that take over to keep it going and perhaps let it grow even more.