

Lee Rode died 5.14.25

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COME AND JOIN OUR CELEBRATION OF LIFE



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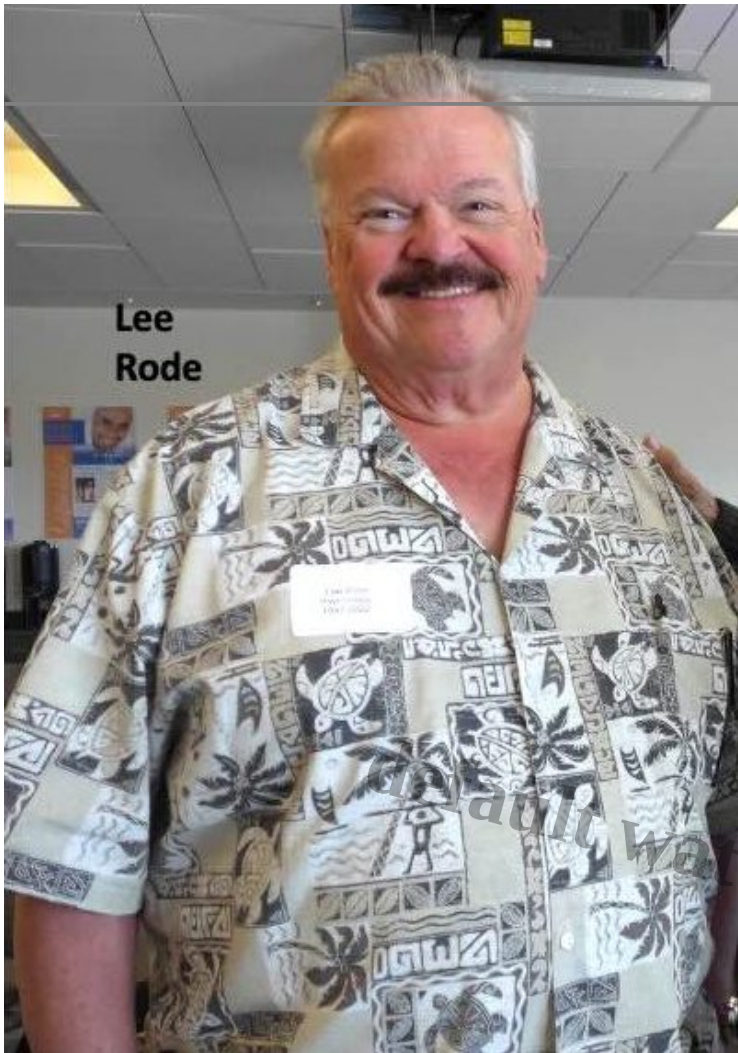
LEE THOMAS RODE



Saturday August 9, 2025 , 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.
Trilogy, 990 Summerset Drive, Rio Vista
Delta Clubhouse, Rio Vista Room
Please honor Lee by wearing your favorite
Hawaiian Shirt.

Black mustaches are optional and

??s Presidentâ??s Office:



We are deeply saddened to share news of the passing of

employee Lee Rode on Wednesday, May 14, 2025. Lee retired last year as a tenured psychology faculty after teaching more than 30 years at Diablo Valley College (DVC). Recently, he started teaching again in the Psychology Department as a part-time instructor.

During his time in the Psychology department, Professor Rode mentored hundreds of students, including several who become instructors themselves at DVC and other colleges and universities.

Leeâ??s family informed us there will be a Celebration of Life later this summer and we will share details of that event when available.

From Nancy Zink, DVCRA Liason: I knew Lee and considered him my friend. When I think of him, I remember his wonderful smile and great sense of humor. He was a dedicated professional who supported students and his community wellâ??an excellent teacher and trustworthy colleague. I will miss seeing him, especially at the DVCRA luncheons and those random encounters when I am out and about in Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill.

His passing is a loss for me and all of those who knew him.

From Donna Wapner:

I am so saddened to hear this! Please send out any info on his celebration of life event.

From Carolyn Seefer:

Oh, Nancy, I am so very sad to hear this. Lee was such a bright soul he always lit up any room he entered. I'd like to share two photos with you. One was taken in Spring 2023 during my and Lee's retirement celebration at DVC. The second was taken in Spring 2024 during our DVCRA luncheon, which was the last time I saw him. I will always be grateful to have known him.

From Maureen O'Leary:

I am very sorry to read this news. I was fond of Lee and enjoyed working on committees with him. A fine colleague and person

I always enjoyed the lively conversations I had with Lee when we would cross paths in the zeroxing room our departments shared (does it even exist anymore?). Lee and his wife traveled quite a bit. Me, less so, but we shared a deep appreciation for all the delights of Paris and would talk about our various experiences there. I also worked with Lee on a couple of college-wide projects and very much appreciated his insights and conscientiousness.

Lee was a fine colleague and extremely likable person. My condolences to his family and close friends.

From Laury Fischer:

Oh this hits hard, it's so sudden and seems out of the blue. I saw Lee almost every day on my way over to bother Tom Barber and we had so many chats over the years about teaching, about students, about DVC, about retirement. He was the essence of the kind of hallway conversation that made DVC so wonderful. I'm saddened by this and thank you for sharing it.

From Rachel Westlake:

I'm so sorry to hear this, it's such a shock. Lee was in my Nexus class, and then I served with him later on the Faculty Senate. What a lovely man always a pleasure to spend time with.

From Gay Ostarello:

Such sad news. Lee's wife was a student of mine, and I certainly knew Lee. If you have an address for Joni, please let me know so I can send her a note PDQ.

From Ed Trujillo:

Lee was a good guy!! So sorry to hear the news.

From Lupe Dannels:

I feel the same way about Lee. He was kind and supportive. He used his sphere of influence to promote equity issues in what was not always a welcoming environment. I remember that he planned to move to the Lodi or Isleton

area. Did that happen, do you know?

From Linda Wheeler:

Thank you, â?!. As sad as it is to read of another DVC instructor passing, it just means to me that Heaven has received a good and kind soul from the DVC roster. Blessings to you.

From Mary Jane Smith:

So sorry to hear this. Lee was a gentle soul whoâ??ll be missed.

I always meant to enroll in his Abnormal Psych class.

Marjorie Lasky: So sad. One of my favorites. If you know or find out how to communicate with Joni, his wife, please let me know.

From Claudia Hein:

Thank you for forwarding this sad news. Lee and I were Nexus buddies â?? â??Class of 1992â?. It was always a pleasure to cross paths with him on campus.

From Teresa Towers:

Thank you, â?!, for sharing this with me. I also considered him a friend. He was always so thoughtful and I looked forward to his Christmas card (letter) every year. Do you know how he passed, I retired last December and he was at my retirement party. â?!. Very sad!

From Lisa Orta:

A fun fact about Lee is that had he been born a girl, his name would have been Lisa. When Tom Barber and I moved to the corner office on the social science wing of the faculty offices, that is the first story he told me. Right then, we decided we were siblings. Through the years of being down-the-hall neighbors, he always had time for a quick hello, a consult, or a quip. His laugh was infectious. His holiday cards with inserted letters were sweet and heartfelt. His hard work to adapt to remote instruction during the shutdown was inspiring. And like a real sibling, he disregarded my encouragement to explore interests outside of teaching during retirement. He did his life his way, coming back to campus to continue teaching after just a short time away. I like to believe that although his passing was so sudden and unexpected, Lee lived a life that brought him great joy and fulfillment. It was an honor to be part of his journey.

From Teri Fournier:

I first met Lee the weekend before his first semester. It was in the quad of our offices and he and Joni were coming by to check out his new office which was across the quad from mine. He was dressed in his suite and tie, looking very professional. I, on the other hand, was in the middle of planting a tree to celebrate my just earned tenure. I was dirty, sweaty, and looking very â??unprofessional.â? He was kind, smiled, and accepted my congratulations. For the longest time, he always wore his suite and tie, even in our California late summer heat. I kind of thought â??this guy is not going to make it here.â? Then came the Hawaiian shirts, and one day, I left my office and heard

from his office across the quad, Todd Rundgren's song, "I Don't Want To Work, I Want To Bang On The drum All Day." I thought, "He will be just fine; he is one of us now!"

From Andy Barlow

Thank you, Nancy, for doing this. Here's my message for Lee Rode. Please post it. I hope you are well. Best, Andy Barlow

I decided to write this because I was so touched by all the beautiful messages that have already been submitted. I think that everyone who knew Lee liked him. He was such a warm, gentle and thoughtful beacon of light at DVC. Lee was one of the people I counted on for support during my time at DVC. I often dropped into his office for no particular reason just to be in his presence. He was truly a comfort to me. Lee had a deep understanding and love of teaching, and most of all, an enduring commitment to all his students. On my last day at DVC, I asked Lee to come to my class to take a picture of the group. I treasure this picture, both because this class was special to me and because it was taken by a master educator. I will miss him, and I am so grateful to have known him. I send my sympathies to Jodi and all of you who are grieving his passing. Andy Barlow

From Mark Akiyama:

I wrote this soon after I heard of Lee's passing and sent it to our area. I wanted to share it with you.

Hey all,

My understanding is you all have been informed that Lee passed away. I was informed yesterday but was asked to wait until the campus wide message was released to reach out to folks. I'm devastated beyond words.

Lee was on my hiring committee, served as my Nexus Mentor and spoke at my tenure reception. We spent many, many hours together in his office chatting about work, students, teaching, and the craziness of this life. He reminded me of the privilege tied to our work and the great responsibilities that come with being an educator. Lee taught me to approach teaching like an artist giving a performance on stage. The importance of preparation, the rehearsals of content/material, and the delivery of that content to our students. I have never met or observed a faculty member so on point in their overall classroom management - down to the very seconds - accounted for on each of his lesson plans. Watching him teach was watching a master craftsman.

Work aside, Lee was my friend. He shared many stories from his and Joni's travels. He introduced me to Joni early in my career at DVC - what another amazing individual. Intelligent wise thoughtful - my observations were they were not only partners in crime but also best friends. I can't imagine how Lee's passing has devastated Joni, smh.

Lee taught me how to be a better human and in turn a better educator. Lee also taught me the profoundness of the idea that "less is more" in teaching and in life, that sometimes we can't do all we want and so we must choose our paths, and do those paths we choose to our best skill/ability. I still have this saying less is more tacked in front of my office desk at DVC. It not only reminds me of above, but also the calmness I always felt after chatting with Lee. It is still the mantra I chant every time I get hung up with the complexities of this life.

For me, I guess the irony of Lee's passing is how much time we spent chatting about the "future" and all the great things we can do when we "retire" from DVC. I can't believe that after a few years of achieving the goal of retirement - he's not here to fulfill all those dreams he had planned!

For now, I will wrestle with the guilt and sadness of not knowing Lee was not well and not reaching out when I suspected something was not right in his sudden departure from teaching. I've learned from when my parents passed the importance of the "closure"; the moments we spend with those we love and say how much we love them and appreciate that person's presence in life.

I hope wherever Lee is now, he's at peace, no longer in pain and void of all of this life's stressors and worries.

I'm gonna miss you my friend. Thank you for all the gifts you shared with us.

Always and forever.

Love,

Mark

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October 20, 2025
Author
uf4retired

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