

Marland Rachel has nothing but great memories of his time studying at Black Hawk College.

"The atmosphere was awesome. All the instructors were very helpful," he said. "I never had a bad day at Black Hawk."



Rachel encourages prospective students to consider Black Hawk College: if you want to earn an associate degree and then transfer, he said it is a great choice.

"Black Hawk prepares you," he said. "It always has. It prepared me."

He started at Black Hawk College East Campus after serving in the U.S. Army for a few years following graduation from Wyoming Community High School.

Rachel was active in Phi Theta Kappa, Psi Beta, and student government, and he served as the student trustee on the Board of Trustees for the 1995-1996 year. He also was a student worker for athletics and the computer lab and served in the Army Reserve during college.

Rachel said BHC instructors were thorough, down to earth, and kept classes interesting. One instructor stuck out in particular: professor Ken Maguire, who inspired him to become a history teacher.

"I had an interest in history anyway, and I've always enjoyed helping, so I thought I would go into education and try to follow in this man's footsteps," Rachel said.

History pulls Rachel in – he really enjoys learning from primary sources, like diaries, that help you see how daily life has changed over time.

"If you want to know what life was really like, you can get a taste of it," Rachel said.

He graduated from Black Hawk College with an Associate in Arts in 1996, and then transferred to Western Illinois University to study history further.

"It was a very smooth transition," he said. "Everything transferred. It was absolutely flawless, it was easy."

He graduated from WIU with a bachelor's degree in history with an endorsement in teaching and a minor in sociology in 1998.



After earning his bachelor's degree, Rachel became a substitute teacher for Kewanee High School. He accepted a permanent full-time teaching position there in 1999.

"My favorite part is when you see the look on the face of a student when they get it, when they completely understand what's being presented," Rachel said.

In addition to sharing his love for history with the students, he also enjoys coaching bowling and officiating cross country in the fall and track and field in the spring.

During his teaching career, Rachel has earned two graduate degrees.

He received a master's degree in educational technology and instructional design from Concordia University, and most recently earned a master's degree in history from Southern New Hampshire University.

Rachel added dual credit instructor for Black Hawk College to his resume as well. He currently teaches dual credit courses in Middle Eastern and United States history.

[Dual credit](#) courses allow in-district students to take college-level courses while they are still in high school. They receive college and high school credit for completing dual credit courses.

“If your goal is to truly graduate in four years this is one of the best ways to do it,” Rachel said.

Many of his students attend Black Hawk College after they graduate. His advice for new BHC students is to be active and make the most of it.

“Take advantage of everything it’s got to offer.”

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