

Professor teaches accounting through new adventure novel

By Charles Nunmaker

There are many times each school year when students are forced to buy ridiculously priced paperbacks to read for their classes, and it often seems that students really don't learn much from being forced to read these generally bland and unentertaining educational books. However, one LSU professor is trying to change this.

Dr. Larry Crumbley, CPA, is a professor who teaches accounting, specifically forensic accounting, to his students at LSU.

"There are really two major branches of forensic accounting. The first one is an investigative accountant or investigative auditor, and that is the person who goes around looking for fraud and trying to stop fraud," said Dr. Crumbley. "The other is what I call litigation services. The accountant helps out the attorney as they deal with a case for a dispute in the courtroom."

As a professor, Dr. Crumbley uses these models of forensic accounting and other accounting services to develop stories that are both educational and adventurous for his students. This has led Dr. Crumbley to write thirteen different novels over the course of his career. These teaching novels vary from adventure to adventure, but each novel has educational value to Dr. Crumbley's students and other students around the country.

"I'm somewhat limited in the development of my stories since this is accounting," he admitted. "Early on, I decided that I had to use a professor. I needed a professor in the story because it is educational. The professor in the story will teach in the classroom, he'll make up exams, but I've got to get educational material across to students, so he will also consult and do some traveling."

"You sort of build your characters around your plot, but I've used Lenny Cramer, the professor, [as a main character] because I'm teaching students," added Dr. Crumbley. "What I'm trying to do with the novels is to let students know what they're going to do when they graduate because we don't really teach them that. In other words, I'm trying to give them some look as to what they will be doing when they graduate and take up a job."

In the past, The Washington Post has called Dr. Crumbley's novels "a sort of Indiana Jones of the Ledger Set." In fact, this sense of adventure in each of his stories has led Dr. Crumbley to create a new novel called "Trap Doors and Trojan Horses."

The story is another educational adventure novel by Dr. Crumbley, but in this novel Dr. Crumbley says there are some twists.

"In this novel, I put a lot more forensic accounting into the story," he said. "The main character is Lenny Cramer, and he is a professor at Georgia State University. He is also a forensic accountant, and he gets involved with a forensic audit in the Coca-Cola Company in Atlanta. He finds the particular bad guys, but then he discovers a much more sinister plot."

With this novel, Dr. Crumbley is showing his students what forensic auditing really is and how it can relate to real world situations like the recent scandals of Bernie Madoff and Robert Stanford's Ponzi schemes.

Although most of Dr. Crumbley's stories include various cases that relate to forensic accounting, all of Dr. Crumbley's novels make learning this material an adventure for his students.

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