Q: Do you feel that every student should take an ethics or philosophy course?

A: I think an ethics or philosophy class would be good for every student, but only if the person is open-minded enough to be receptive. I think it's very beneficial for those who consider ethics an important part of their life. My own experience has been that students who have taken such a course feel that they have received something significant from it. They discover that they are thinking more clearly, and they understand themselves better. People are complex beings and have the need and potential to think in depth. An ethics class may give a student the opportunity to straighten out his or her thinking on some important issues. We sell ourselves short if we go through life without ever focusing our thoughts.

Q: What part will ethics play in a student's future?

A: Working and making money are important, but sometimes we lose our perspective. We are still human beings in a society, and our conduct has implications and consequences for other people. Our moral values are simply a part of who we are as people, and it is absurd to say, "I'm just going to learn a bunch of skills and go out to work, but I'm not going to think about the values that define who I am and what impact my work has on the rest of the world." People want to save their ethics for their family and friends, but you can't divorce your private life from your career. Education is a means for enhancing our lives; ethics and philosophy are part and parcel of defining ourselves. Studying philosophy enables you to come to know yourself, what you believe and what you value. In fact, self discovery is one of the most important things that education can offer. Self examination and comparison of your values with other's values gives you an opportunity to sort through issues in a careful and reasonable way. Although in the end, in a diversified world, people will come out in different places, we're all better off when people respond with thoughtful answers rather than unreflective conclusions.

can produce some very bad consequences. Sorting out when and where values have to come into play is still a complex matter, but it is important for people to think about the place of ethics in their lives.

Q: What trends in ethical values or philosophical thought have you observed?

A: Recently, there has been a resurgence of interest expressed by groups such as the Moral Majority, as well as by individuals reacting to excessive abuse of scientific knowledge, or problems in the business, social, and cultural environments. When large numbers of

Q: What are some of the issues discussed in ethics classes?

A: Some of the more common issues include euthanasia (mercy killing), abortion, and world hunger. In professional ethics classes, we may discuss medical ethics, such as where a patient's rights end and a physician's responsibilities begin; or legal ethics, such as lawyers defending people they know are guilty. We might also discuss the social responsibility of professionals in the fields of psychology, journalism, engineering, advertising, and business. The topics vary in *Contemporary Conflicts of Morals*, a general education class.

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people act from any value system, there are consequences. For example, divorce rates and the number of broken families have skyrocketed, and as a reaction, some people have placed a higher value on the family. I still see, however, a split between private family morality and work and political morality. For instance, concern for world suffering is no longer very common. People may be very moralistic in their views on abortion and homosexuality, but they don't seem to care about people starving in the third world. The concern for world suffering has given way to individualism for both economical and ideological reasons. External factors constantly alter people's values and this is reflected in living patterns.

Q: What is the goal of the ethics class?

A: The objective of any ethics or philosophy class is to help a student develop an understanding of a problem, appreciate the arguments for and against various solutions, and draw his or her own conclusions by exercising reasoning skills and personal values. A person can't say, "I hold this position rather than someone else's because I know I'm right," but he or she can say, "I hold this position because I apparently place a greater value on a particular subject." Reasonable people can and do disagree. It's the disagreement that causes a person to give an account for his beliefs and defend them. It is important for students to know what they believe and why, and to subject those beliefs to a critical examination.