

# Trinity is losing a powerhouse pair

Retiring prof, education department chairman have made their influence felt far and wide.

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Superintendents and principals don't get a lot of sympathy. But they have a friend in

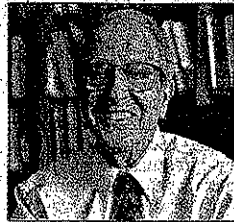
Trinity. They either have taught or mentored many of the city's most prominent superintendents and principals, allowing their breadth of knowledge about education philosophy to trickle down to the students in every desk.

Both have announced they are retiring from Trinity this

school year, signifying the end of an era for educational leadership in the city.

"Those two men are incredible models for all of us," said Jerry Zapata, principal of Larkspur Elementary in the North East Independent School Dis-

See TRINITY/9A



Tom Sergiovanni (left) is distinguished education professor and Paul Kelleher chairs the education department.

## TRINITY

CONTINUED FROM 1A

trict and a graduate of Trinity's master's program in educational leadership.

Kelleher, an impressive scholar in his own right, called Sergiovanni the "high priest of educational leadership."

"This very quiet man is probably one of our greatest thinkers," Richard Middleton, North East's superintendent, said of Sergiovanni. "He has had a tremendous impact."

A world-renowned scholar, Sergiovanni has written 41 books, all of them by dictation and hand-written notes.

"I don't know how to use a computer," said Sergiovanni, 72. Sergiovanni was a stressed-out administrator at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign when former chairman John Moore called to recruit him to Trinity in the early 1980s.

"Where the hell is Trinity anyway?" a frazzled Sergiovanni asked.

After a few cold beers over some Tex-Mex cuisine, Sergiovanni relocated to San Antonio where he helped Trinity turn the education department into a community gem.

Because it's small, Trinity does not churn out teachers, but focuses on cultivating school leaders, especially principals. The school enrolls around 250 students in its master's degree programs for teachers, school psychologists and aspiring principals.

But its impact doesn't stop there.

Through the Center for Educational Leadership, Trinity partners with more than 600 schools in the San Antonio area, offering an array of programs such as workshops for gifted and talented teachers and students, get-togethers for superintendents and principals, and the \$2,500 Trinity Prize for teachers.

Sergiovanni has converted many leaders to his philosophy of "professional learning communities," the idea of teachers and principals collaborating and sharing responsibility for the success of every student.

"Schools are fragmented and isolated places," Sergiovanni said. "We put the pieces together."

Kelleher, a former superintendent in suburban New York and Connecticut, came to Trinity in 2001 at Sergiovanni's urging.

When Kelleher arrived at Trinity, he began hauling in millions in grants and gifts, and revived the Principals' Center, in which groups of principals meet over dinner and talk about problems they're facing. He also reached out to superintendents, starting a monthly lunch forum.

"I have great sympathy for superintendents," Kelleher said. "They are in such a chaotic, turbulent world—if it's not the state Legislature and finances, it's the swine flu."

John Folks, superintendent of Northside ISD, values that support.

"If I wanted to talk to Kelleher, I could pick up the phone," Folks said. "He was always such a great listener and sympathizer because he understood."

The pair also worked with Barbara Gentry, senior vice president of community affairs at USAA, to connect business leaders with superintendents and sketch out a list of skills that employers need from high school graduates.

When enrollment began sliding at urban Lee High School in North East, Sergiovanni helped conceptualize the International School of the Americas, a magnet school to attract students interested in global economics.

"Paul and Tom both have always been there when there has been an opportunity to collaborate on something that is positive for education in our community," Gentry said.

According to Sergiovanni, the education department is a way for Trinity to give back, and new leaders will continue that work after the pair retire. Sergiovanni plans to volunteer at schools and continue writing books; Kelleher will continue to work with superintendents through a consulting company.

With a smile, Sergiovanni acknowledges they will be missed. "The two of us together, we knock their socks off."