For Gerald “Skip” Jubb, dean of The University of Arizona South, it’s the commencement ceremonies that make the job so worthwhile, the opportunity to see the faces of students preparing to begin a new chapter of their lives.

After three years as UA South dean, Jubb is about to embark on a new chapter of his own as he retires from a 39-year career in higher education.

Known among students and colleagues for his friendly demeanor and readiness to help with everything from organizing student functions to ushering the college through difficult financial times, Jubb will officially retire as associate vice president and dean of UA South on Sept. 1. He was only the second person to hold the position at the branch campus.

"Dr. Jubb epitomizes a University dean," said Lillian Rautanen, a 40-year-old mother of four and student at UA South.

"With branch campus deans, it's a different ball of wax," she said. "It's a different breed of administrator because you're dealing with different levels of society within the communities you serve, and Dr. Jubb goes out of his way to serve every single one. We're going to miss him."

Rautanen, the president of the Associated Students of The University of Arizona South, praised Jubb for the personalized attention he provides to UA South students, who attend classes at campuses in Sierra Vista, Douglas, at the UA Science and Technology Park and at Pima Community College's east campus in Tucson.

She is one of the many nontraditional students at UA South, where a diverse student body consists of a proportionately large amount of older adults, compared with the main campus. UA South students often have families and full-time jobs, and many are military members or their spouses, Jubb said. UA South is also a Hispanic-Serving Institution, a designation from the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities that requires that student enrollment be at least 25 percent Hispanic.

Online classes, late afternoon and evening classes, and classes via interactive television help make it possible for those with daytime commitments or difficulties commuting attend UA South, which offers 14 undergraduate degree and two graduate degree programs.

As he looks back on his career, Jubb prefers to talk about his students rather than his professional accomplishments at UA South.
"I enjoy being with them. It's a whole lot different than the main campus. The students tend to be older, more mature, serious," said the 66-year-old, who is also an adjunct entomology professor. "Serving the people in the community has been a real pleasure."

Rautanen said Jubb was particularly supportive when her husband, a now-retired U.S. Army Ranger, was deployed to Afghanistan last year, frequently checking in with her to see how she was coping.

"The lives that he touches are multiple," Rautanen said. "When I walk across that stage (at commencement) there will be a lot of people there that helped me, and Dr. Jubb was one of them."

Under Jubb's leadership, student enrollment at UA South has increased from 332 full-time equivalent students in the fall of 2006 to 433 this spring. Jubb said he hopes to start the fall semester with 500 or more.

Eugene Sander, vice provost and dean of the UA's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, recommended Jubb for the dean's position at UA South in 2006 and credits him with increasing enrollment and boosting faculty morale.

"Skip has absolutely done a magnificent job getting the faculty at UA South feeling better about themselves and getting them to do good work," he said.

Todd Lutes, who teaches political science at the branch campus, said Jubb has helped guide the University through challenging financial times while showing concern for faculty members.

"I think he's been a good steward. And he's always had a good rapport with the faculty members at UA South," he said.

Sander, who will help UA South transition to new leadership, said he hopes Jubb's replacement will be selected by the start of the fall semester. The position's title will change from dean to campus executive officer.

Before becoming dean of UA South, Jubb, affectionately referred to as Skip Â€? a variation on "Skippy," a childhood nickname Â€? taught and worked as an administrator at Pennsylvania State University, the University of Maryland and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

He completed a bachelor's degree in biology at New Mexico Highlands University before going on to earn Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in entomology from the UA.

His love for bugs has earned him the title of "Dr. Bug" with children, and he's been known to don a Monarch butterfly bowtie and teach neighborhood kids about insects. In retirement, Jubb says, "I want to get back in my Dr. Bug outfit."

Also high on the retirement agenda is cross-country travel with his wife of 42 years, Carole.

"There's a lot of this country we haven't seen and we want to see it through the windshield of our Honda Odyssey," Jubb said. Â