When Brantley Eubanks, SBA’64, handles one of his Grecian vases or Egyptian statues or lovingly eyes one of his Russian icons, he is more than relishing his role as a collector of fine antiquities. He is carrying forward the heft of his Menlo College education. Almost everything that Eubanks has done as a professional and art connoisseur can be traced to Menlo and to one professor who has had a huge and enduring influence over his life: Patrick Tobin.

“Tobin was my mentor and my friend,” Eubanks said. “I could talk to him about everything and anything. He was one of the most intelligent people I have ever known.”
Hired by Judge Russell to broaden the educations of Menlo’s business students, Tobin taught classes in history, writing, culture and Western civilization. For more than a decade, he also led vast intercontinental tours for Menlo students. It was on one of these tours that a young Eubanks discovered his passion for travel and for ancient art and artifacts.

“We took the train from Yugoslavia down to Greece, and when we rounded the corner to Athens and I saw the Parthenon and Acropolis for the first time, it was one of the most moving experiences in my life,” Eubanks says, recounting the two-month trip as if it were yesterday. “We stayed across from the Pantheon in Rome, we climbed the Pyramids in Egypt, we went down the Nile by a paddle boat all the way to temples of Ramses II and his wife at Abu Simbel before they were moved, and camped in the Sahara. I began collecting relics then. Tobin introduced me to Greek vases and Russian icons.”

Eubanks’ life since then has been a continuation of that life-altering travel experience. As an assistant guide following his Menlo graduation, he accompanied Tobin on two additional trips with students, and then made a decision to pursue a career that would allow him to see as much of the world as possible. For 35 years, Eubanks worked in the airline industry as a flight director. He has been to almost every major country in the world, with three notable exceptions: Australia, New Zealand and Indonesia.

Tobin died more than 15 years ago, but his legacy is alive in Brantley Eubanks, who remains an international art collector to this day. “There’s a story behind each acquisition,” he notes. And there’s clearly a special Menlo professor behind Eubanks’s lifetime passion of collecting and traveling.