

Mr Flickinger

On Thursday, August 10th, the first of my heroes passed away. Mr. Flickinger was one of the "big people" when I was a "little person" that I wanted to grow up to be like. I had the experience of knowing about Mr. Flickinger before I met him because of older siblings, the rare experience of having him as my math teacher for 4 consecutive years of high school, the unique experience of sharing a classroom with him when I returned to W-SR as a teacher for several years, and the challenge of taking over his classes when he retired. My admiration for him never wavered throughout that progression.

Mr. Flickinger was the definition of class. There was something about him that made you expect a little bit more from yourself. I bought a t-shirt when I was in high school that had one of those "double meaning sayings" on it that are very common today but a little risqué for Dave Arns. My girlfriend was surprised that I had purchased it and I remember her saying "you're going to wear that shirt to Mr. Flickinger's class?" I never wore the t-shirt to school. He ran a disciplined classroom but had us in stitches nearly every day. He rarely missed class and cared about us beyond being one of his math students. Mr. Flickinger was a country gentleman with a great smile.

Most college students have a 14 week student teaching experience just prior entering the field of education which helps shape the teacher they are to become. I felt that my teacher training began the day I walked into Mr. Flickinger's classroom as a freshman in high school. After experiencing him as an instructor, my career path was as straight as an arrow. I-knew exactly what I wanted to be and who wanted to be like.

He was a great showman in the classroom. He had a unique way of gathering our attention and maintaining it. Example: He'd begin class with "Ladies and Gentlemen, if a polynomial walked in the room right now would you recognize it?" Of course our answer was NO but we knew by the end of the period we would. He had a great grasp of the anticipatory set before education defined it. Or he would say "If I called you in the middle of the night would you know the quadratic formula?" He said it in a way that we thought he might actually call. That meant here is something we'd better learn and we wrote it above the telephone at home just in case he did call. Material that we hadn't covered yet in class he referred to as "coming attractions." One of the happiest days of my teaching career was when Mr. Flickinger retired because then I could start using his clichés in my classroom without feeling I had to ask his permission first. When it came

time to order materials for the next year with a crunched budget Mr. Flickinger would say "Just give me a piece of chalk and a blackboard."

If you did not experience Mr. Flickinger in the classroom watch the movie STAND AND DELIVER. Escalante in that movie is a good characterization of Mr. Flickinger: a teacher who is very knowledgeable about his subject, presents it in a way that makes you want to learn it, and cares about you just as much as a person as he does you as a math student. He was the first teacher that I can remember who occasionally would get everyone's attention at the end of the period as if to make a grand announcement and then he'd say "I just want you guys to know I really like you." We weren't mature enough at the time to say the same in return but I think he knew.

In the movie LION KING, the king dies and his heir to the throne steps in and a new heir is born. Mr. Flickinger would have referred to that as a constant function. But I think Mr. Flickinger's legacy is much different than that. A great math teacher teaches for 30 odd years and affects a certain number of his students (10, 20 , 30 I don't know the numbers) in a way that they want to become educators. They each enter the profession, teaching with the vitality that he portrayed on a daily basis in a classroom full of humor, mutual respect, and a great learning environment. Those 10, 20, 30 teachers each affect a certain numbers of students to enter the profession and the growth and affect is exponential. Better yet let's do the math again. A great man teaches for 30 odd years and models pride in his country, an appreciation for family, the value of service to his community, a disciplined life style, the value of hard work, and the beauty of a well timed grin or a good laugh on a daily basis to 120-150 students per year and those students become adults and in some manner reflect the same values to the people they come in contact with and the affect is again exponential but with a greater rate of growth. What a legacy!

On Mr. Flickinger's ascent up into the clouds on Thursday I'm sure he took advantage of the view to find a few more golf balls laying in the tall grass and to check out who was doing what on the high school grounds. When he arrived I pictured an angel driving up in a golf cart to bring him to the beginning of the line and the master reaching out his hand to shake and saying "Well done good and faithful servant. Welcome home Frank."

Mary Bell, Frank's family, and friends, God Bless.

Written by David Arns, WHS class of 1978. Delivered at the funeral.

Obituary:

Frank G. Flickinger

August 3, 1923 - August 10, 2000

Frank Flickinger WAVERLY, Iowa #45;- Frank G. Flickinger, 77, of Waverly, died suddenly of a heart attack on Thursday, Aug. 10, 2000, at the Waverly Municipal Hospital in Waverly. Graveside services were Monday at St. Paul's Lutheran Cemetery in Waverly. The Rev. Kathleen Armstrong officiated with the American Legion Post No. 176 conducting military services. Memorial services were Monday at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Waverly. Memorials may be made to St. Paul's Lutheran Church or Wartburg College.

Mr. Flickinger was born on Aug. 3, 1923, in Crete, Ill., the son of Henry and Emelia Klebe Flickinger. He married Fern Louise Maisenbach on Aug. 27, 1950, in Muscatine. She died on May 26, 1973. He then married Mary Belle Kramb in Three Rivers, Mich. On Dec.21, 1975. He was baptized and confirmed at Zion Lutheran Church in Muscatine. He graduated from the Muscatine High School, Muscatine Jr. College with an associates, Wartburg College with a bachelors, and Iowa State Teachers College with a masters. Frank served with the U.S. Army during World War II and the Korean Conflict. He also served for 5 years with the Army reserve. He was a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Waverly, a member of the American Legion Post No. 176 of Waverly, member of the Waverly Lions Club, a life member of I.S.E.A., N.E.A., and a member of A.A.R.P.

Frank had a passion for teaching, and loved to spend time outdoors, especially working in his garden.

Survivors include his wife, Mary Belle of Waverly; a step-son, Dan Kramb of Carlsbad, Calif.; two sisters and their husbands, Dorothy and Jack Hanft of Muscatine, Marie and Jerry Christian of Wilmington, Ill.; one brother, Fred Beckmann of Tacoma, Wash.; one step-granddaughter; one step-grandson, and five step great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents; his first wife, Fern; a stillborn son in 1953; three sisters, Emmaline Flickinger, Lillian Ruckman, Ernestine Rumbavage; and two brothers, William and Henry Flickinger.

www.wittichfuneralhome.com/obituary/53594/Frank-Flickinger-of-Waverly-Iowa

Pictures:



1956 WHS Go-Hawk