

Career Tech Matters

by Dennis Franks • Sept. 18, 2020

Each spring we recognize more than 100 students for their academic, CTSO and club accomplishments. In the 2018-19 school year, an award was instituted that allowed seniors to nominate a staff member who had an influence on them.



The 2019-20 award assembly fell victim to the building closure but it was important to recognize the teacher nominated by so many students. Last week, during Jason Vesey's staff meeting, the 2020 award was presented to Bill Anderson by our inaugural recipient, Dave Pentecost.

It is fitting that these men are our first two recipients of this award.

While their personalities differ, their commitment to students is evident.

Bill, a social studies teacher, is one of the most liked, easy-going staff members we have. Students love his "like you're at home look and feel" management style that make his classroom environment second to none.

Dave, a science teacher, is no-nonsense but appreciated by his students.

What's interesting is that teaching was not either man's first career.

Bill has two bachelor's degrees; the first he earned in political science with an eye toward being a lawyer. But he changed career paths, going to Ohio University to get a degree in education.

"I credit my late sister Ann with encouraging me to give teaching a try," Bill said. After earning that bachelor's and then a master's in anthropology from Eastern New Mexico University, Ann — who was a Pickaway-Ross satellite teacher — suggested he consider applying at the career center.

He did and he's been an asset to Pickaway-Ross for more than two decades, first as a satellite teacher at Lighthouse Youth Center for 13 years before joining main campus 2009.

In the nominations, students wrote "Mr. Anderson truly cares about his students" and "He makes his classroom a very easy place to learn and always keeps class interesting."

Bill said that his philosophy with students is to be engaged.



Dave Pentecost, left, the 2019 recipient of the Most Influential Staff Member award, presented Bill Anderson with his plaque last week as the 2020 recipient.

"I have found that if you listen to the students and remember what they tell you, they will open up. Respect is a two-way street and I tell my students that I will treat them like the young adults that they are."

While Dave had a teaching license after college, he earned his master's in geology and spent 25 years in industry before joining Pickaway-Ross. His family was friends with Shara Cochenour's family and she encouraged Dave, who was substitute teaching for us, to apply when a science teaching position opened.

Like Bill, Dave develops a rapport with his students. He has received grants to fund trips for his Advanced Earth Science students and he has worked with Mark Johnston to offer an Amateur Radio Club during mentoring.

It would be easy to think of this honor as a popularity contest but Abigail Mascari, a 2019 senior who nominated Dave, understood what this award recognizes:

"Although he may seem mean and unapproachable at times, that's just a façade. Ask him for help and he'll make time for you. With his humor and intellect, he makes for a great teacher because he makes hard topics more understandable while keeping your attention with his comical little science jokes."

All of our staff members are excellent and I look forward to seeing who is selected by our 2021 seniors next spring.

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