

Thomas F. Drummey Memorial Scholarship



"Few, if any, gave as much to the Westfield Public Schools – teacher, and principal of 3 elementary schools." Mr. George Wallis, retired principal of Westfield High School

Mr. "Tom" Drummey retired in 1997 as Principal of Southampton Road School after serving in the Westfield Public School system for 28 years. Tom began his career in 1953 after graduating from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts and earning a Master's Degree in Education from Worcester State College. Mr. Drummey began as a substitute teacher in Marlboro, MA, eventually securing a position

teaching seventh and eighth grade science which he held for 15 years. In 1969, Tom and his family moved to Westfield where he had accepted a position teaching sixth grade at Juniper Park School, as well as supervising student teachers. For the next three decades, Mr. Drummey was influential in the lives of many students, aspiring teachers, and in the development of Westfield's elementary curriculum.

During his years at Juniper Park School, Tom passed on his skill and love of teaching to many student teachers as they prepared for careers in education. Those student teachers recall his "fatherly nurturing," his "quiet nature," and his "gentle, kind ways" in their experiences with Mr. Drummey.

In the late 1970's, Tom was inspired by the potential of computers in education. He worked with the Juniper Park PTO to collect Campbell Soup labels and hold popcorn sales to earn money for the purchase of the first Apple computer in the Westfield elementary schools. Many popcorn sales and soup labels later, Juniper Park proudly operated a "computer lab" with several Macintosh PC's. The computer lab was expanded by a generous donation from the Kim family and was renamed in memory of their son, David Kim, who loved working with the computers.

In addition to establishing a computer lab in the elementary curriculum, Mr. Drummey contributed further as an Enrichment Teacher. In this role, Tom developed curricula, activities, and materials for both students and educators in order to enhance the elementary curriculum. He enjoyed creating games to teach his students while providing opportunities for hands-on learning. Many former students consider "Mr. D." as their favorite teacher, and many more fondly recall his field trips to Catskill Game Farm accompanied by "original" stories narrated en route.

Throughout the next decade, from 1985 through his retirement, Mr. Drummey served as Principal of Abner Gibbs, Franklin Avenue, and Southampton Road Schools. As a principal, Mr. Drummey made it a point to know every student and family at the school. To the teachers, Tom provided "support, guidance, and encouragement" as a leader, combined with his "quiet, gentle ways."

At his retirement celebration at Southampton Road School in 1997, teachers, students, and family members all sang along to a Bobby Saltus original – "Oh, Mr. D., we're gonna miss you when you go..." as they wished him well in retirement.

As much as he gave during his 43 years as an educator, Tom's family was happy to see him pursue his many interests in retirement. He traveled widely throughout the United States and Europe with his wife Catherine. He doted on his grandchildren, Brendan, Tim, Brigid, and Rachel Swords, bringing them gifts of turquoise from the Arizona desert, lava from Mount Etna and Mount Vesuvius, hats from Bavaria, and books on a multitude of topics.

Tom researched his family history back several generations in Ireland and related the genealogy to his children, Ted, Susan, Daniel and Betsy – often over an Irish coffee or a pint of Guinness!

Mr. Drummey leaves a rich legacy in our community; one that will be served well by a student choosing to pursue a career in education, or simply pursuing higher education for its own sake. The family and friends of Tom Drummey established this scholarship following his death in 2007.

Written by: Sue Drummey with the help of her siblings, Ted Drummey, Dan Drummey,
and Betsy Fuschetto (Tom's four children)

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