

A salute to our MV leaders who are moving on

The end of the 2019-20 school year has been nothing but unique and memorable. And memorable is an appropriate word to use to note the impact that several key MV players have made on more than a thousand students. This year we bid farewell to our retirees: secretaries Cheryl Gates and Pat Sabers, industrial tech instructor Greg Drew, vocal music instructor Beth Mueller, elementary teacher Sue Goldsmith and superintendent Doug Tuetken. We also bid farewell to Ann Norton, Johnston Elementary principal and school improvement coordinator, who has taken a position with Grant Wood AEA.

Cheryl Gates



Some people just can't get out of school, and Cheryl Gates is one of them. Gates started kindergarten at MV 60 years ago, and this year she's finally saying goodbye after serving various secretarial roles in the district. Her career with MV started in 1972 when she took the position of high school guidance office secretary only two months after she graduated from high school. "It took me years to be comfortable

in the teacher's lounge," Gates reminisced. She also served as the Pep Club sponsor for a year. She took a break between 1978-1990 when her children were young.

She found that working in the school was a good fit for her family life. "I was always so glad to get to be there at school with my sons as they grew up. It was so nice to be allowed to attend all their activities, get time off for their programs, appointments, etc."

Gates said that she isn't completely closing the door on MV: "You will still see me at school from time to time, filling in when others are gone." She also plans to spend more time with her grandchildren and help take care of her mother-in-law who is 93 and still living at home. She will also continue her active role in the Hopkinton Community Church.

Gates said she'll miss many aspects of school. "This might sound funny, but I will miss most the starting day of each new school year. That first day of school was just the most exciting day - well, and the last day! Wait - that day before Christmas vacation was always good. I do have a least favorite memory - WINTER! It brings extra work for everyone at school with the late starts and early outs and cancellations and re-scheduling and pushing snow and bad roads and freezing temperatures. I won't miss dealing with winter! And yet, having a "snow day" was great! I rarely had to worry about driving to work when the weather was bad."

During her time at MV, Gates had the opportunity to work with some special people. "I enjoyed working all those years with Laurie Kramer over in the little building others called 'The White House' (because the administration offices were there.) She was a great friend. She put up with years of helping me and also of my talking non-stop all day. I liked working all those years with Pam Overman, too. She could work circles around me! And Mr. Tuetken will always be my favorite superintendent. Most of all, it was a real gift to

have worked with so, so many exceptional people and to know so many wonderful children. Maquoketa Valley's atmosphere is one of caring and kindness -- may that forever continue to be true!"

When recollecting moments when she was proud to be a Wildcat, Gates' school spirit came through: "There were proud moments, especially all those many times we cheered together because it was the MV teams who were winners in so many ways! That happened in sports, in music, in speech, and most often in academics, thanks to the teachers and staff and coaches who have always been the very best."

Gates also noted that she's experienced some changes during her decades at MV, particularly with technology which would change things almost every year at school. For years, Gates assembled the school newsletter where she compiled, printed, folded, stapled, labeled and mailed over 2190 of them every month. "Then one day Doug Sadewasser taught me how to email it! With one "click," I sent it to everyone and anyone in the whole district! That one change saved the district almost \$10,000 a year after that!"

Gates often tells people that she is a product of the MV school system. She took Creative Writing class as a junior and senior, worked on the Wildcat Echo staff (editor her senior year); participated in band, vocal, Student Council, both speech and drama all four years of high school. "All that was valuable preparation for my work and made me feel 'at home' there from the beginning. The Board and Administration at Maquoketa Valley Schools have taken very good care of me and helped me have a great life. I am grateful beyond words!"

Greg Drew

For 24 years Greg Drew has made a huge impact on his industrial tech students and the athletes he coached. When he started at MV, he was half-time industrial technology and half-time drivers ed. He has coached JV football, junior high wrestling, and junior high track. He became the head varsity football coach and held that position for 10 years. During that time he gave up junior high wrestling since it overlapped football. In 2008 he became a full-time industrial technology teacher and taught drivers ed only in the summer.

Drew's leadership in the classroom will be missed greatly, and he stated he will remember his time in the classroom fondly. "I have really enjoyed teaching industrial tech classes. Maquoketa Valley has had many excellent teachers so the program was very strong before I got here. I tried to carry on the strong tradition already established and bring in new technology to enhance our students' awareness of careers in the construction industry. Students like taking "shop" classes because they like to work with their hands; they are kinesthetic learners. Our students embraced my style of teaching so they made it fun for me and I tried to make it fun for them."

While teaching was his full-time job, coaching was also a passion. "I have many wonderful memories of when I was the head football coach — the players we worked with, the mix of coaching staffs through the years, and the pride the MV student body possesses. One of the memorable games: The first year of being head coach we had a great mix of talent, excellent skill players, a tough, physical line, and great coaches. Two games that stand out that year were both against Dyersville Beckman. The mid-season game was the game of the week on KWWL. Everyone expected it to be an offensive shootout, but it became a defensive struggle with Maquoketa Valley upsetting the #9 ranked team in the state 12-9. We met up with Beckman again in the playoffs. Maquoketa Valley put together a great first half and went to the locker room with a 14-7 lead. Beckman owned most of the second half going up 14-21 with minutes remaining. MV put together a good offensive drive and scored with about a minute on the clock which made it 20-21. The decision was made to go for the two using Coach Huegel's "flip fake" play. Cory DeShaw (Pat Saber's son) sprinted to the pylon, collided with a Beck-

man player but was still able to extend the ball over the goal line. MV 22 Beckman 21. It was a storybook finish!"

Drew stated he will miss the interactions with the students. "They make me laugh, they make me smile, and they get me frustrated. Because of all of those reasons, I will miss them dearly. I will also miss the relationships with the faculty members. They are the engine that drives the machine called Maquoketa Valley. It has been a great school to teach at."

Drew said his appreciation for what MV is goes beyond his teaching and coaching. "Coaching provides many thrilling memories but I also beam with pride when, as a spectator, I watch the talent of our drama students, vocal and instrumental music performances, speech students representing MV, and the multiple sports performances. It is meaningful to personally know the talent we have and be able to share in their successes."

Now that the lesson book plan is closed and the whistle is hung up, Drew said he and his wife plan to move to Decorah where he will work on woodworking projects, possibly substitute teach, maybe help a carpenter or farmer, and volunteer.

Sue Goldsmith

MV has been blessed with the humor, wit, and dedication of Sue Goldsmith since 1997 (as best as she recalls) when she started at MV as an associate in the high school special education program. After two years, she became the TAG (Talented and Gifted) education teacher for about six years. Since then she has been a fifth grade teacher.

Goldsmith said she will most remember the fun with students and staff! Some of these fun times include: potlucks with the high school students in the resource room, building robots and toothpick bridges with students in the TAG room, bowling in the hallway after school with teachers, reminding the staff to "keep moving" during an inservice training, flying



paper airplanes with students during study hall, and having various amounts of success growing plants in science class. "Most of all I think about how much I have enjoyed teaching and learning from my students over the years, as well as working with the best colleagues around!"

As Goldsmith plans to move onto the next phase of her life, she will remember the impact of being a Wildcat. "MV has been my family for half of my adult life. This sense of family was driven home when I dealt with breast cancer a year ago. The MV community rallied around me and supported me in so many ways! I feel humbled, grateful, and so loved! I will miss the people most of all!"

So what does the next phase look like for Goldsmith? "At this point, I'm not sure. As the world slowly returns to 'normal,' I plan to look for another job outside of education. Doing what? I'm open to suggestions!"

Goldsmith stated she is grateful for the wonderful experiences at MV! "I wish you all luck as you navigate the challenges ahead as you return to school in the fall. You can do this! You are MV STRONG!"



Beth Mueller

It's hard to think of MV music and not think of the iconic Beth Mueller. For 32 years, Mueller has taught middle school and high school vocal music. She has also been involved in the fall musicals and was always up for the faculty vs. student basketball games.

Mueller's interest in vocal jazz is the foundation for some of her proudest MV memories, including being the director of Smooth Harmony and Jazz X-Press. MV singers have been accepted to the Iowa All State Jazz Choir 10 years in a row, and Mueller's efforts with the vocal jazz groups has not gone unnoticed by other directors throughout the state because of MV's frequent appearances at the Iowa Vocal Jazz Championships.

She will also reminisce fondly on the many outstanding performances at IHSMA Solo/Ensemble Festival and Large Group festival.

Some of her favorite musical productions have been *Seussical Jr.* in 2017 and *Bright Star* in 2019.

Mueller's favorite MV memories also include: "The MV Singing Chickens, my window washing and office teepeeing duo Johnny B. and Matt D., painting the 'Disney' backdrop, writing original scripts for 'Dimensions' with the students, the Perot/Bush/Stockdale/Clinton/Quayle skits, filming commercials like 'Yolanta' and 'Desperate For Men,' directing 'Home of the Range' using a cactus music stand, taking a bus load of students to all state camp/auditions, the 1998 music trip to Washington D.C., Chad Wilson taking Smooth Harmony's first Outstanding Performance trophy from Cedar Rapids Washington's Invitational and running with it to show Heather Conner at her home when we got back some time past 11 p.m. that night, (then he ran back with it and returned it to me), yelling "Hey U" at Miss U in the west hall, Christmas concerts at St. John's, so many musicals — 31 high school and 14 middle school productions."

She said she will miss witnessing each student's musical/personal growth from sixth grade through 12th as well as assembling performances with each student in mind.

Mueller plans to fill her retirement with writing and arranging a lot of music as well as spending more time with her geographically dispersed family (daughter Teri is in Wisconsin and son Phil is in Texas).



She also plans to work with her horses on a much more consistent basis.

Mueller offers some words of gratitude to the MV family: "Thank you, Maquoketa Valley, for supporting my family and the students involved in the music program. It has been an absolute joy working in a 'small school' where the students have the drive and resilience to achieve at a 'big school' level."

Ann Norton



Even though few current students knew her as a teacher, all MV students have felt the impact of Ann Norton's presence at Maquoketa Valley. For the past 10 years, Norton has served as the school improvement coordinator/curriculum director and has helped strengthen instruction and curriculum in grades PK-12.

In her 28 years at MV, Norton has played several roles. She came to MV in 1992 and taught junior high reading. She later transferred to fifth grade and then third grade. In 2010 she shifted from third grade to Title I Reading and Curriculum Strategist. At the end of that year, she shifted full-time into the world of school improvement and curriculum, where she has been for the last 10 years. One of those years, Norton was in a shared position as a curriculum di-

rector with the Central City school district, and for the last four of those years also served as principal at Johnston Elementary.

Norton will use those 28 years of experience this fall to help her in her new position as regional administrator at Grant Wood Area Education Agency.

Norton noted that the time she spent at MV was made most memorable because of the students and staff. "The kids, their parents, support staff, teachers, administrators — it's the people, their hard work ethic, and the amazing, supportive family feel of MV that I will miss the most. These people have made me laugh until I've cried, and they have also supported me during my toughest times, helping me 'keep on keeping on.' And the kids. I can't even begin to share all my favorite funny, sweet, heart-breaking, and challenging moments with students over the years. My third graders and I sang many phrases from popular songs because the words popped up in a lesson, and we created many silly dances and movements to go with our learning."

Norton has a lot to be proud of when she looks back at her tenure at MV. "I'm so incredibly proud of when our people have pulled together to support someone -- students, families, staff -- through a tough time. A recent example was when all the kids and staff came out into the hallway to celebrate as Sue Goldsmith walked down the hallway to go to her final cancer treatment. Other proud moments have been when our students or staff have worked so hard to accomplish something, and they pull it off brilliantly. For example, when our staff has worked to implement new instructional strategies or when our students have practiced for a performance, contest or event."

It's the impact on students that Norton has worked tirelessly for. "Our student achievement is also something to be incredibly proud of. We have been recognized by our AEA for high performance, selected for state honors, and most recently nominated for a national honor. Our state assessment scores last year were among the top in the state, which reflects the hard work and dedication of so many."

Norton's words of farewell? "I have been so honored to have served this school district for 28 years and appreciate the opportunities I've been given here. I have loved every minute and wouldn't trade it for the world. Once a Wildcat, always a Wildcat. Thank you, MV."

Pat Sabers



Pat Sabers has worked at MV for 30 years. She started at Earlville Elementary in 1990 as a teacher's aide and became the secretary at Earlville in 2000. Beyond her duties in the elementary building, Sabers coached middle school basketball and softball and was also the JV girls basketball coach for a few years.

Sabers' favorite memories from working at MV focus on the people. "I have enjoyed working with wonderful people at Maquoketa Valley. I also enjoy seeing and being with all the kids every day." Sabers stated she will miss the students most. "I remember one year there was a student who wouldn't give me a hug in the beginning of the school year," Sabers reminisced. "Weeks and months went by without a hug. The end of the school year came and he came into the office and gave me the biggest hug that I will never forget. I missed that this year, saying goodbye to all the kids."

Sabers' departure will be felt in many ways, especially at homecoming. The entire MV community has eagerly anticipated what Sabers' float creation would look like. "Homecoming memories are special, too. Putting together the Earlville Elementary float year after year was very time consuming but always fun."

Not only has Sabers worked in the district for 30 years, but she also graduated from MV. As a senior, she participated in the 1974 Girls State Basketball Tournament. Her love of basketball continued, and she started the Elementary Basketball League in 1990 for MV students with 125 kids participating "with hopes that they, too, could have proud moments playing

MV basketball." She has also coached many traveling basketball teams over the years.

Upon retirement, Sabers plans on getting a dog and hopes to move to South Carolina to enjoy the South Carolina hospitality and be closer to her daughter, son-in-law and grandsons.

Sabers' parting words? "I would like to say many, many thanks to my mom and dad and my family for teaching me what is important in life. Faith, family and friends — what more could I ask for? Also, to make a difference in someone's life you don't have to be brilliant, rich, beautiful, or perfect. You just have to care! Once a Wildcat, always a Wildcat! Thanks for the memories!"

Doug Tuetken

After 15 years as a Wildcat, Doug Tuetken is hanging up his superintendent cap and planning to spend more time with his daughters and his 8.5 grandchildren as well as making time for some traveling.

While at MV, Tuetken served as superintendent for all 15 years as well as the middle school principal for a year, the high school principal for four years and a shared superintendent at Midland for two years and one year with North Linn.

His varied roles at MV provided him opportunities to see MV from different lenses from which to take pride. He noted he has been proud helping some of MV's students overcome adversity, becoming resilient and using the trauma they've been dealt with to help inspire them to be-

come stronger and successful. "I'm also extremely proud of the work that our administrative team and teachers have done to create a caring culture for all of our kids at MV," Tuetken stated. "I am proud of the work they have done with and for academic achievement."

Tuetken's vision for improved facilities will be a legacy he leaves behind as he led major remodeling projects from the past five years at the district, including a major renovation at the high school. "I am proud of our facilities and what we have done for the community with diminishing resources."

Tuetken stated he has several fond memories of his tenure at MV including listening to the inspirational messages from the Academic Excellence guests of honor and having an elementary student in Kris Wilson's class find \$1 and then give it to the Dollars for Scholars program. He also knew how to turn lemons into lemonade: During homecoming one year he sent a goat that was left in his yard to the sale barn and it sold for significant dollars to benefit the Dollars for Scholars.

What will he miss most about school? "The start of every year is what I will miss most. The new hope, energy and enthusiasm that staff and our kids have at the beginning of the year are electric to me."

Tuetken said he truly appreciates the opportunity to be a part of this great school community. "I will miss coming to work every day, but it is time for change. That is what will make our district even stronger for our kids."

