

IHS Alumni Association
Educator of Excellence Award Presentation
Monday March 10, 2014

Note: In lieu of the typical quarterly meeting, alumni assembled for a presentation of the Educator of Excellence Award given to former Independence faculty members.

At 11:15 lunch, consisting of pizza, salad and dessert, was served in the Family and Consumer Sciences room of the new high school.

Alumni President, Dale Veverka ('70), introduced IHS principal, William McGuinness who made the opening remarks.

Darlynn Velotta and Vern Blaze, representing the City of Independence, presented the Educator of Excellence Award to former teachers.

Vern stated that he owes his ability to communicate effectively to **Geraldine Kaftan**, his former English teacher, as he presented her with the prestigious award. Darlynn presented the same honor to former Social Studies teacher, **Jeffrey Enckler**.

Dave Gallagher, IHS Social Studies teacher and former football coach, began his testimonials about both educators. He said Geraldine Kaftan provided balance in his life. She had grace and class. He taught alongside Geraldine who was very supportive and he was blessed to have her as his friend. He said Jeffrey Enckler was knowledgeable and well-read – Jeffrey was his “Google”. He respected Jeffrey who cared about his students.

Larry Luciano, 1987 IHS graduate, enjoyed having Geraldine as his English teacher and provided his Top Ten List for Ms. Kaftan:

- 10) The Bunny Run
- 9) Demo Pizzas
- 8) She Passed Around Stuff
- 7) Geraldine's Double and Triple Grading Scale
- 6) Handwriting
- 5) Culturama, Hoffbrau House, Severance Hall, etc.
- 4) Larry's Mom and Geraldine Both Attended Lourdes High School
- 3) Before Larry proposed to his wife, she had to meet Geraldine to see if she met the criteria
- 2) The Great Authors
- 1) Larry is Inspired and Motivated by Acknowledging Geraldine Publicly

2001 graduate, Amy Veverka Parker, had Mr. Enckler for a teacher, both in Junior High and High School. She said he cared about what he was teaching. His students respected him.

Rhonee (Trakas '75) Iula advised that Karen Wallace, a '75 graduate who could not be present for this event, nominated Geraldine Kaftan for the award. Karen said Geraldine exposed her to many works of literature that have remained her favorites. She inspired generations of kids through her enthusiasm.

Amber Veverka, 2007 graduate, enjoyed Mr. Enckler for three classes where she learned about global issues and achieved life skills.

Superintendent of Independence Public Schools, Steve Marlow, thanked everyone for attending .

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie (Jorasch 69) Pandin
Recording Secretary
IHS Alumni Association