

Benny T. Griffiths

Northwood Principal Benny T. Griffiths had a unique personal approach that set him apart – he knew nearly every student and parent by name, making each one feel valued. His commitment to his students, his parents, and his staff made a lasting impression on each and every one.

Benny was born February 26, 1948, to Don and June Griffiths and grew up in Massillon. He was the oldest of four children. His father worked at Republic Steel and, for a time, Benny did too. After he graduated from Washington High School, Benny attended Kent State Stark as a business administration major. His first job was in the accounting department at Republic.

At Kent, Benny met his wife Suzanne whom he credits with convincing him to pursue a career in education. He did his student teaching at Northwood Elementary, and, after graduating from Malone in 1974, he was hired to teach second grade at Northwood. He was the first male hired to

teach in the primary grades in North Canton. He also began coaching high school track and middle school cross country.

In 1980, Benny was selected to establish the district's gifted and talented program. He earned his Masters in Gifted Education at Kent State and has also earned certification in elementary administration, supervision, and as a superintendent. Benny held his position as supervisor of gifted and talented until 1989 when fellow inductee Peggy McClain assumed the role. During his tenure, he created a gifted summer program, established the high school Academic Challenge team, served as summer school principal, and worked as an instructor at Malone.

In 1989, Benny briefly left North Canton to take a principal position at L.J. Smith Elementary School in Massillon. His school was K through 6, and he also supervised the gifted program. In 1994, Benny was back where he belonged at Northwood where he served as principal until his retirement in 2010.

Benny has been busy beyond his paid school responsibilities as well. He has served as a Charter member of the North Canton City Schools Educational Endowment Fund, coordinated North Canton City Schools Corporate Cup, implemented the Outdoor Learning Lab at Northwood, and was on the Stark County Administrator's Leadership Team. He has been a member of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the Stark County International Reading Association. He has been a member of the Education Committee at the Canton Chamber of Commerce, a board member at the Massillon West Stark Chamber of Commerce, and coordinated the building of a Habitat for Humanity home. He coached youth basketball at the Y, was the announcer for Hoover's Boys' Basketball games, and was the starter for the first North Canton YMCA July 4th race. After his retirement, he served as a community

liaison for Absolute Home Health and Hospice Care Services.

Benny has been honored for the work that he has done. He not only was awarded the Business Plan Award from the Massillon West Stark Chamber, but they have since named it after him. He was awarded the Martha Holden Jennings Scholar Award, the Outstanding Principal's Award from the Stark County PTA, and the YMCA North Canton Leadership and Fellowship Award. Each year a Hoover Senior earns the Six Pillars of Character Scholarship Award in his name, and six times a Hoover senior has chosen him as their honored educator.

Benny has been married to Suzanne since 1969. Together they established New Home Church in 2018 where he is an active participant in the worship service. The church has a reputation for its involvement in community outreach. He is also a current member of the Patient Voice Committee

at Aultman Hospital. He enjoys reading, singing, planting flowers and playing golf.

Benny T. Griffiths has been a beloved, inspiring educator and community member in North Canton. The North Canton Alumni Association is pleased to have him as an inductee in its Hall of Distinction.