



# National Education Week

November 11 -17, 2007

Who was your favorite teacher and why? Did a particular teacher positively influence your life and if so, who and how?

## SC Notables Speak out about their Favorite Teachers



**The Honorable Thomas C. Alexander**  
**SC Senate**  
**District 1 - Oconee & Pickens Cos.**

"I was very fortunate to have Mrs. Martha Hedden as a Teacher in High School. She took great interest in all her students and was a great encourager. She also saw the potential in individual students and inspired us to work for our goals. She had a great impact on my life then and has continued to influence my life."



**Betty T. Bagley**  
**Anderson School District Five**  
**District Superintendent**

"Two things provided me with warmth and comfort during my first grade year in a rural South Carolina School: a pot-belly stove in the middle of the room and Ms. Marie Edens, the teacher who, without knowledge of "phonic dyslexia," was able to find an alternate means by which I could learn to read. Without her determination and compassion, I may never have enjoyed academic success, which has indeed enriched my life."



**James F. Barker, FAIA**  
**Clemson University**  
**University President**

"Of the many great teachers I've had, the best may be Beverly N. "Ben" Skardon. He taught me English at Clemson University, where Ben graduated in 1938. His love of literature and love of life were inspirational, especially after we learned his personal story as a survivor of the Bataan Death March during World War II. Ben endured unspeakable hardships. He was close to death many times. Yet he chose to live the rest of his life without bitterness. He chose to remember the love and support and sacrifice of his fellow prisoners, some of them also Clemson graduates, instead of the brutality of his captors. Ben's great humanity infused his lesson with deep meaning. I still carry those lessons with me today."

**Bennie Bennett**  
**Newberry County Schools**  
**District Superintendent**

"Laverne Rose: Mr. Rose was my first basketball coach at East Clarendon High School in Turbeville, South Carolina. He was a tremendous motivator and had a great work ethic. He taught us all that hard work and education would be key in attaining any level of success. He did not accept excuses for not giving your best and pushed us to believe we could become anything in life we wanted. I rely often on the values I learned from him when I am faced with challenges in my career. He truly taught me that where a person is going is far more important than where they came from."



**Glen Carson, Ph.D.**  
**Spartanburg School District Four**  
**District Assistant Superintendent**

"Miss Anne Redman was my teacher in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Arrington Elementary School in Greenville, SC. She was a master at organization, teaching a 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade combination class each year. But beyond her organizational skills, she was a master at motivating and caring. She continually challenged me and all my classmates to go beyond what we have accomplished on our own. My debt to Ms. Redman is immeasurable."



**Ralph Fennell, Jr.**  
**Williamsburg County School District**  
**District Superintendent**

"Mrs. Elizabeth Webber, my elementary teacher, inspired me, as a young child, to always do my best. Mrs. Webber was an excellent teacher who was always prepared to challenge her students to excel. She shared her many travel and life experiences with her students. She always took the time to stress the importance of reading and writing. I vividly remember diagramming endless sentences during my sixth grade year. "Every word is important in a sentence. Each word plays a special role," she frequently said during class. I attribute my keen awareness of details to Mrs. Webber's lessons on diagramming sentences. In my current administrative duties, I often find myself using skills learned under her guidance. When I reflect upon our school district, I realize that each person, like words in a sentence, plays an important role that leads to the success of our district. Thanks to great educators like Mrs. Elizabeth Webber whose positive influence impacts the world."



**Vince Ford**  
**Vice Chairman**  
**Richland One School District**

“ Mrs. Neal taught me Math as a ninth grade student at A.C. Flora High School. I remember that she was always on task and that she accepted no excuses from me or other students. She never allowed disruptive behavior to change the focus of the lesson plan of the day. I can honestly say that she was a true professional. Thank you very much, Mrs. Neal. Other

Great Teachers: Caver 1st grade – Mrs. Hard, Carver 5th grade – Mrs. Martin; W.A. Perry 7th grade – Mrs. Irene Kelly, W.A. Perry 7th grade – Mr. Blackley; A.C. Flora – Ms. Young and Mrs. Ella McGrant.”



**Judi Gaston**  
**WIS -TV**  
**Anchor**

“My favorite teacher was Dr. Don Dorminey. He was my calculus teacher in high school. Every week he gave us a really complicated problem that we could try to solve for extra credit. Those problems were legendary because years would go by without a student solving one. Then one Friday, during my senior year, Dr. Dorminey walked in and said someone solved the problem – and it was me! I think I saw a twinkle in his eyes when he smiled and congratulated me. That day Dr. Dorminey made me believe that if I really apply myself I can accomplish anything!”



**Lili Gresham**  
**Charleston Southern University**  
**Higher Education Development Officer & Educator**

“Dr. Arnold Hite’s of Charleston Southern University is my favorite educator. I struggled to understand the math equations in his macroeconomics class, but that semester I visited his office where we practiced writing equations on his dry erase board – he even helped me with my algebra homework. Dr.

Hite’ patience, encouragement and kindness made me a better student and a more caring individual. His faith in me to overcoming my weakness allowed me to see my strengths.”



**Representative Shirley R. Hinson**  
**House of Representatives**  
**District 92 - Berkeley Co.**

"Daniel Gross from Hanalon High School was one of my favorite teachers. He encouraged students to know/learn about the U.S.A. through political cartoons. I didn't realize then how much that single class activity would mean so much to me. I continue to analyze political cartoons and think of Dan Gross, my US History teacher, each time. I truly appreciate his wisdom!"



**Hannah Horne**  
**WIS -TV**  
**Anchor**

"I excelled in two subjects in high school... Music... and lunch... Thankfully, Karen Combs knew how to craft one of those! Mrs. Combs was my chorus teacher at Theodore High School in Theodore, Alabama. While choir is not the traditional classroom experience, Mrs. Combs' taught me many lessons that I use today as a news anchor. It's an unusual correlation, but arts education taught me early lessons of confidence, performance, discipline and teamwork. Despite my travels, I have yet to meet anyone like Mrs. Combs with a more beautiful voice or gracious spirit. Mrs. Combs' example as a Christian woman, teacher, mom and wife were then, and continue to be an example to me today. I often think of her teaching us to "stay on top of the note." In other words, don't go flat! It's great advice that transfers into any profession! Because of my experience, I remain an unwavering advocate of arts education in public schools."



**William B. James, Ph.D.**  
**Cherokee County Schools**  
**District Superintendent**

"I met Gary Robinette the fall of my freshman high school year. He was first-year teacher/coach. I was one of his players with a smart mouth and bad attitude. Coach Robinette was positive, ethical, intelligent, and caring. Despite our different personalities, we migrated toward each other. I became a better student, a better person, and maybe a better player by having played for him. When I decided to teach and coach, Gary's advice was to 'treat them all like they are your own children' and that advice served me well. Coach Robinette stands out as an exemplary educator and professional in Spartanburg County 45 years later. I am eternally grateful for having met and played for him. Thanks, coach."



**Rainy H. Knight, Ph. D**  
**Darlington County Schools**  
**District Superintendent**

"I was fortunate to have many teachers who challenged and inspired me. The most influential was John Hutchinson of Cheraw High, a chemistry teacher and coach. You knew better than to attend a class unprepared or to give anything less than your all at practice. Thanks to Hutch, I was well prepared for college science classes and I eventually became a science teacher. I hope I can touch lives the way one teacher touched mine."



**John M. Kirby, Ed.D**  
**Dillon School District Three**  
**District Superintendent**

"Martha Rogan, a five foot tall revered giant, mesmerized students with compelling evangelist style messages, accounted for each student's learning, controlled classes with compassion and created mutual respect for all. She embraced life, adored children and exalted teaching. Her name is synonymous with love, sincerity, fairness, high expectations, values, improvement and dedication, the epitome of outstanding teaching. She is certainly teaching angels in heaven while gazing down upon 'her children' now making positive impacts in today's world."



**David Longshore, Jr., Ph.D.**  
**Orangeburg County Three Schools**  
**District Superintendent**

"Mrs. Earline Gary was my favorite teacher during my K-12 schooling. She taught me high school algebra and geometry. I grew up in poverty with very little thought of attending school after twelfth grade. Neither of my parents attended school beyond the ninth grade. As sharecroppers, they struggled to provide the bare necessities for eight children. Consequently, there was no expectation that resources would be available for any of us to attend college. Mrs. Gary recognized my potential and told me repeatedly during my high school years that I was college material and she was going to see to it that I attend."



**Leon Lott**  
**Richland County Sheriff**

“My favorite teacher was my 7th grade math teacher, Mrs. Percy. At the time I thought she was the meanest person in the world. She kept pushing me to do better. I worked so hard to please her but she always demanded more. I later realized that she helped me to always strive to do my best. And throughout my school years, math was always my best subject. My hardest teacher was the best. Thank you Mrs. Percy! You helped me get where I am today. “



**Scott Mercer, Ph.D.**  
**Spartanburg School District Two**  
**District Superintendent**

“Nathan Crescengi was my history teacher and basketball coach in the early 1970s at a small high school in West Virginia. “Coach” recognized my desire to achieve and the willingness to work and encourage those attributes. He influenced my decision to become a teacher and administrator. He made the telephone contact securing a college scholarship for me and I would not be who I am today without his impact on my life.”



**Nathaniel Miller, Ph.D.**  
**Marion School District Two**  
**District Superintendent**

“My favorite teacher was Ms. Panther, a fourth grade teacher in New York city. As a young student growing up in Harlem, New York, Ms. Panther was dedicated to insuring that each student mastered reading, writing, and spelling. She was a hard, demanding teacher who often spanked you back in those days. She demanded respect and excellence in all of your assignments. I remember her talking to my father about my behavior and that was all it took for me to correct my behavior. Her legacy to me was to work hard, pursue excellence in life and never give up on your dreams or goals.”



**Richard Gene Moore, Ph.D.**  
**Lancaster County Schools**  
**District Superintendent**

"I was a 6'3", 165 lb. high school freshman – she was maybe 5', 100 lbs. I towered over her, but I never went to her class unprepared -- she made me want to excel. Patsy Richardson helped me discover my talent for math and gave me the confidence to major in math. Years later when I began teaching, she was the yardstick I used to measure my success. I'm thankful she made such a positive difference for me, my family and the students who experienced a little of her through me."



**Frank Morgan, Ph.D.**  
**Kershaw County Schools**  
**District Superintendent**

"My favorite teacher, and the one who literally changed my life, was Anne Fallon, my eighth grade teacher. Prior to my year in her class, my school career had been less than successful. From my first day in her class Ms. Fallon demonstrated her belief that I could succeed. While it took me a while to come around, she never gave up on me. I would not be where I am today if it hadn't been for this remarkable teacher."



**Joe Pinner**  
**WIS -TV**  
**Anchor**

"My favorite teacher (and I had many good ones) was Miss Louise Bell, my one-armed first grade school marm at New Bern NC Central School who literally set the stage for my enjoying the learning experience. Her gentle, matronly, caring nature made all her students feel comfortable and safe. When you had been really good, you would find a dime on your desk in the morning (yep, even I found some). That was a lot of money back in 1941! My first non-professional performance was in her class as a Jack-in-the-Box. My mother said I was sensational but didn't wave at her. I informed her that Jack-in-the-boxes don't wave at mothers! Louise Bell will always remain in my heart as the ultimate teacher who had a most positive and lasting impact on me, at a very early and critical age! They named the cafeteria after her. Enough said!"



**Oliver "Buddy" Pough**  
**South Carolina State University**  
**Head Football Coach**

"My favorite teacher was Connie Terry, my sixth grade teacher at Felton Laboratory School. She was my first teacher at a new school who made sure I adjusted to my new settings; and she always made me feel special. Now that I am older, my classmates that I see said they felt special also."



**Natalie "Natt" Roers**  
**WLTX -TV**  
**Anchor**

"Bobbi Smith will always stand out in my mind as the person who, outside of my family, most shaped who I am today. Bobbi started up a local performing arts company in Maryland in the 1980's, and although her performers were children, she held them to adult standards. A former teacher to the stars, Bobbi amazed audiences with her ability to produce Broadway caliber shows, with a juvenile cast. Bobbi proved that with a combination of discipline, hard work, and belief in yourself it was possible to surpass the greatest expectations. I grew up knowing that no goal was out of reach because of her. It's just a matter of how bad you want it. Bobbi joined the stars above when she passed away in 1999. Hundreds of students came to the stage she directed on, and sang in tribute to her. I was proud to be one of them. Thank God for Teachers."



**Valerie Page Truesdale, Ph.D.**  
**Beaufort County School District**  
**District Superintendent**

"Dr. Sara Nalley, professor at Columbia College now, taught me Drama at Dreher High School in Columbia, SC. Miss Nalley made a nervous freshman, self-conscious to a fault, stand tall, breathe deeply, and deliver soliloquies and one act plays with confidence. She taught me to engage an audience, to play the emotions on the faces of my listeners. Miss Nalley believed in me and I've tried to live up to her high expectations ever since."



**Fay Sprouse**  
**Ware Shoals School District 51**  
**District Superintendent**

"I had many special teachers during my years in school, and each of them helped shape the person I am today. If I had to pick one who stands above the rest, it would be my first grade teacher, Mrs. Goodbar. She was caring and kind, and she taught me so much that year. She made me fall in love with school. I want to thank all teachers for their dedication, caring, and inspiration!"



**Andrew A. Sorensen, Ph.D.**  
**University of South Carolina**  
**University President**

"My favorite teacher in High School was Mr. Thompson, who was my social studies teacher. He challenged us to think about developing career goals, which none of us had done in a thoughtful way. He also stimulated us to be more aware of our local political structure, and to work with our parents in getting our families to be more involved in community affairs."



**Congressman Joe Wilson**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> District of South Carolina**

"I was fortunate in every grade attending the public schools of downtown Charleston to have dedicated teachers, but I will always be grateful for Sara Bookhart. As Social Studies teacher at the High School of Charleston, she stimulated lively discussion, encouraged involvement, and is directly responsible for inspiring me to public service."



**Mitchell M. Zais, Ph.D.**  
**Newberry College**  
**College President**

"John Stamm of New York City was my favorite teacher. He was my math teacher and science teacher in both 8th and 9th grades. He used a grading scale that was objective and easily understood by a middle schooler. After every exam, we recomputed our average for the course and then changed seats accordingly. Seated in a horseshoe shape, with the teacher's desk at the head, the student with the highest average moved to the desk to the teacher's right, around the horseshoe, so the student with the lowest average was to his left. This provided immediate feedback as well as enormous incentive to study hard and do well."