

Lauren Dailey

Mr. Murray

It was the first day of my seventh grade year, and the day had not started out very well. My entire schedule had been changed and I was extremely frustrated because I could not find my right classroom. I walked into what was supposed to be my third period English class, but only to be greeted by an unfamiliar face. "I heard through the grapevine that you hated me," were the first words I heard out of this man I had never seen before. I was so confused, but I played along with his little joke. The second I sat down, I turned to the girl who sat beside me and asked if this was really our teacher, or if he was just a substitute. By the look on her face, I could tell she was just about as baffled by this confusing day as I was. I would have never guessed; however, that this would be the start of an outstanding year. Mr. John Murray was not only a great teacher, but a great person because of his sense of humor, his creative teaching methods, and his overall love for the students.

First of all, Mr. Murray was a young teacher, so he knew exactly how we felt as students. No matter what kind of day I was having, I always could rely on him to make me smile. Somehow, he always knew the right thing to say at the right time, and I was constantly laughing at the things he did and said. For example, towards the middle of the school year Mr. Murray bought trophies to give out once a week for two students who had done well academically or socially. When one of the students came back with a piece of the trophy accidentally chipped off, Mr. Murray made a "music video" to fix it that went to the song "How to Save a Life" by The Fray. Even the kids who wanted to be "cool" and not laugh at something a teacher would do were bursting out laughing at what Mr. Murray had thought of off the top of his head. It never ceased to amaze me how much fun you could actually have during school hours; Mr. Murray made this possible.

Besides of his sense of humor, Mr. Murray's creative teaching methods were something that really inspired me. Even if it was just a day where he would lecture, which was very rare, I never felt as though I would fall asleep during his English or History class. He was always thinking of new things we could do to help us learn the curriculum and it must have worked considering most of his student's S.O.L scores. This man always came up with these statistics on things that would help the students do well in school, and one of those was recess. He was constantly reminding us how much a good thirty minutes of recess could do us. We would all head outside most every Friday in the spring and play football, or just spend some time in the gorgeous weather. Yet, it was not just outside time that he came up with, he also had fresh ideas for every unit of our books. One of them was writing songs to go along with our history curriculum, so he got together with a student in our class who played the bass guitar and did just that. Together they wrote songs to go along with different wars and other important events in the United States' history. Even today, I can still remember most of the facts he taught us through these interesting activities that no other teacher pursued.

Finally, Murray's over-all love for the students was just about the icing on the cake for my experience with him. He would always find time to stay after school with students, not necessarily for school related work, but just to hang out after school hours. Also, he would constantly ask students about their sports games or other extra curricular

activities they he truly loved attending. He would never ask because he had to, but rather because he really wanted to come watch his students outside of school. Mr. Murray and I also enjoyed the same type of music, and I always looked forward to discussing some different aspect of The Dave Matthews Band or any other group of musicians that came into the subject. I never felt awkward or scared to go up and have a conversation with him because somehow, I knew he would always know what I was trying to say. Mr. Murray was a teacher who really cared for his students, and would do anything for them, no matter the circumstance.

The fact remains that Mr. Murray was a great teacher because of his sense of humor, his creative teaching methods, and his love for every one of his students. Mr. Murray was all about community, and I have benefited an enormous amount from my experience with him.