

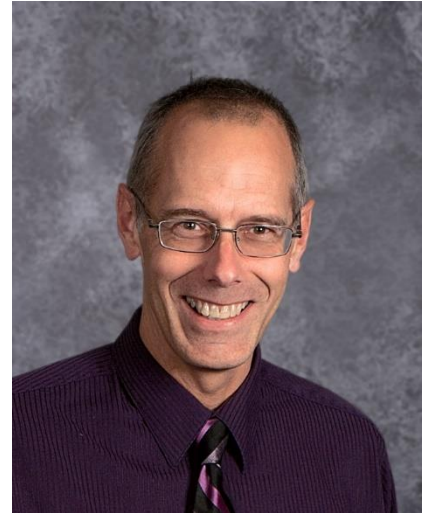
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ED306

Dr. Sorvaag

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Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings during my senior year at Holy Trinity were guaranteed to have two things. Mr. Ebensperger (lovingly nicknamed Mr. E, or Enigma by my class) would be outside his classroom smiling and saying hi to everyone, an adorable older man. We even had a secret handshake. Mr. Smithley would be on the other end of the hallway drinking coffee and laughing with Mr. Kulzer, brightening everyone's day. These three teachers influenced my high school career. I had many teachers that influenced me throughout my educational career, but these three stand out. Most of all, Mr. Kulzer stands out to me. To this day I can remember some of the lessons he taught me.



I can only remember Mr. Kulzer being absent from school 2 times. The first time was when it was so icy, he couldn't leave his house. The second was when his wife has a miscarriage during my junior or senior year of high school. This was the first time in my life I had truly seen a teacher vulnerable with us. He knew we cared about his life, just as he cared about ours. Throughout my experiences with Mr. Kulzer, I never felt like I was in the wrong place. Even though I was working through a subject I don't see myself as successful in, Mr. Kulzer helped me see that anyone can be successful, even if they aren't the best.

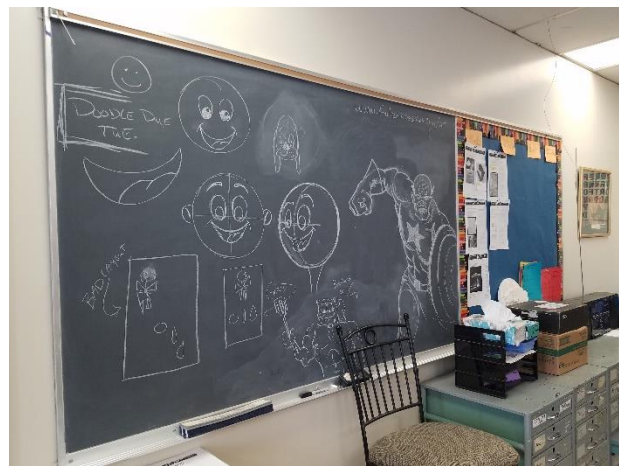
The art department at Holy Trinity, when Mr. Kulzer started, was struggling. The teacher before Mr. Kulzer had made life miserable for many students. There were so many complaints about her that one of the Deans had to sit in on every class to observe her “teaching”. Mr. Kulzer inherited an undervalued department of mistrust. Despite only working at Holy Trinity on Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays, Mr. Kulzer worked to save something he loved. Within a year, he had turned the reputation of the department around and everyone wanted to take his classes, including myself. I had never really liked art and didn’t quite get the hang of it, but he made me feel successful. I improved in my skills. To him, that was success. Since I graduated, Mr. Kulzer has taken over the Industrial Arts Program. He personally built the new program when the old teacher retired. He made a 3D Manufacturing class that has been very successful. Katlyn Pokornowski, HT senior and future SMUMN student, says she loves the class. It is a fun and out of the ordinary class. She enjoys his demonstrations, lesson plans, and advice. In addition to being an excellent teacher, he is wise beyond his years. During my observation of his class, I noticed some of the things I always saw in high school. Mr. Kulzer is such a positive man, who always looks for the beauty in life. He very rarely gets angry with people and uses his sufferings to show his love for his faith. He is very kind, but still expects a lot of his students. Even when he gives an assignment, he gives specific instructions, but they are flexible enough to let the students to branch out.

I am happy to say that I still have an excellent relationship with Mr. Kulzer. At the beginning of our interview I asked him how his family is. He told me about his oldest son, who is now in college, his younger kids, and his wife. I told him about my family and how my dad is doing. I can still talk to him the same way as I did when I was in high school. Mr. Kulzer teaches at Holy Trinity on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, but at ACGC Elementary on

Tuesday and Thursday. Because of this he always must have 2 projects going at the same time. There is one that is done when he is there, another is done when another teacher watches the class.

When Mr. Kulzer was in college, he had two paths that he chose from. He could have been a teacher or a graphic designer. He decided to go into teacher. He thought that if he didn't like it, he could become a graphic designer after. He found that he enjoyed his work and colleagues at UMD and realized that teaching was his calling. He remembered two of his teachers from elementary school. One cranked Queen and was "super cool". The other encouraged him to continue working on his art. He felt valued in her class. He decided he wanted to be like them. He also knew that he wanted to give students an opportunity that was better than his in high school. When he was a freshman in high school, he had an art teacher that sat at her desk reading a newspaper all day. She never taught anything. Later in his high school career, the art program was cut. He was given an opportunity to become a lifeguard and found that he loved teaching swimming lessons. Seeing his students grow and learn was astounding to him.

Mr. Kulzer's class was never boring. We always listened to music, worked hard, and felt appreciated. He became the teacher he wanted to be. There was never a day we came in and felt like we didn't make him proud. There wasn't a day that passed where I felt that he didn't want us there. He



encouraged us to do our best and be the best person we could be. He drew with us and always

made sure to have a drawing on the board that would make us smile, but he always had something to say that would make us laugh. To this day, I remember many of the lessons he taught me; both about art, and about life. Mr. Kulzer had an influence on my education that I will never forget. The beauty in life is everywhere, even the places nobody thinks about: like the relationship between and teacher and their students.