

WOKSAPE

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Legendary Teacher, Mr. Richard Anderson, is Remembered for his Mentorship



BY OLIVIA CHRISTOPHER

Mr. Richard Anderson, former adviser of *Woksape* and Yankton High School teacher, passed away Nov. 28, 2012, in Sioux Falls.

Anderson taught in the Yankton School District for 46 years. He began teaching at the middle school in 1962 and moved to the English department of Yankton High School in 1968 where he became *Woksape* adviser. Anderson retired from teaching in 2008 at age 68.

"He was a mentor, a teacher's teacher, and a friend," said Paul Harens, former teacher at Yankton High School and friend to Anderson.

In his 40 years at Yankton High School, Anderson contributed greatly to the newspaper and English department.

Under Anderson's advisement, the *Woksape* earned over thirty All-State Newspaper awards including a 17-year streak of receiving the award from 1973-1991. With Anderson's successes, the paper was placed in the South Dakota High School Journalism Hall of Fame.

Over 100 of his students were named South Dakota All-State Journalists and some even became professional journalists.

Josh Hoffner, sports editor for Anderson in 1994, is now an editor for the Western Division of the Associated Press.

"We (The Associated Press) really pride ourselves on clear and concise writing, and that is one thing Mr. Anderson really pushed," said Hoffner.

Anderson had a huge impact on journalism at Yankton High School and seemed to know everything there is to know about writing.

"He taught the importance of strong writing," said Hoffner, "the bedrock of good journalism, and the core values of journalism to his students."

The South Dakota High School Activities Association presents a Founders award each year to "to an individual in recognition of outstanding service to high school journalism education through the teaching of the principles of good journalism in South Dakota."

Due to his efforts in journalism, Anderson was awarded the Founders award in 1986 and in 2005.

Because of Anderson's passion for English and compassion for his students, he was named the Chairman of the English Department at Yankton High School in 1971, a position he held until his retirement in 2008.

Anderson was a people person. Regardless whether they were teachers or students, Anderson gave everyone his thought and time. He understood the people he met and saw their potential.

"He had this ability to treat you as an adult," said Nathan Harens, lifelong friend of Anderson and 2001 *Woksape* editor. "He valued every opinion and belief anyone would give him. He took the time to express this with what he thought and believed."

Anderson was known for carrying a banana and bottomless coffee mug and having his notorious, merciless red pen nearby.

"I grew to both love and hate his signature red pen, but only now have I come to truly respect what he was trying to teach me," said Casie Collignon, *Woksape* editor in 1995. "Ideas become better with editing. Thoughts become clearer with reflection. Saying more can usually be done with fewer words."

Anderson pushed students beyond their limits and never settled for mediocrity. He genuinely cared about his students and their successes.

"He always had piles in his room, piles for every student," said Paul Harens.

Kylie Gross, *Woksape* editor in 2005, said she knew Anderson before she started high school, and Anderson had taught her mother.

"I took his journalism class as a freshman, and he took me under his wing. Because of that, I was on the *Woksape* staff for all four years," said Gross. "He convinced me to do the Journalism City portion of Girls State; and at the organization, I was awarded Outstanding Journalist and a scholarship. All of my success was because of Mr. Anderson."

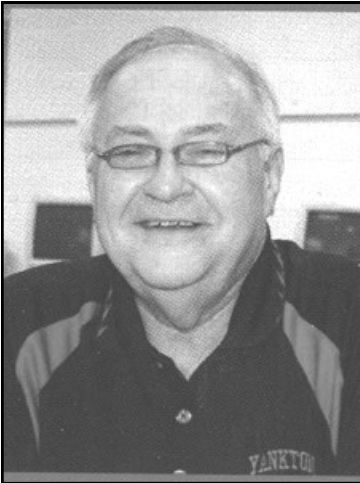
Nathan Harens said Anderson often gave his students books to which he felt they could relate.

"He knew the potential of what you could be," said Nathan Harens. "He always knew what would impact and inspire me."

"He was a rare gem in the teaching world—he was skilled in his trade, seemed to know everything and anything about writing, and was willing to dedicate any amount of time to help students understand the material," said Alex Smith, *Woksape* editor in 2008.

Gross appreciated his insight. "He really understood you, he pushed and challenged you, but on your own chosen path," said Gross.

Anderson's teachings went beyond the high school classroom. Many students credit their success to Anderson.

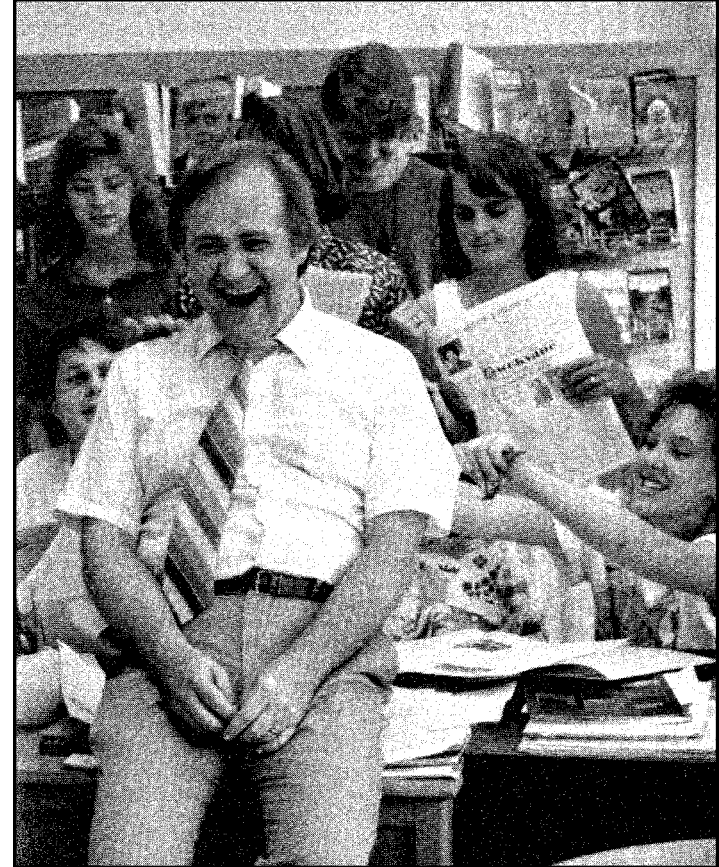


COURTESY PHOTOS

Top: Mr. Richard Anderson is shown with his first *Woksape* staff in 1969.

Above: Anderson's YHS staff photo was taken shortly before his retirement in 2008.

Right: Anderson smiles and shares a laugh with his 1987 *Woksape* staff members.



"In college, I got A's on my papers," said Sarah Zautke, *Woksape* editor in 2004. "I 100 percent account that to Mr. Anderson and the English staff."

Hoffner agrees that Anderson put him ahead of the game. "His teachings helped me get through college and my career," said Hoffner.

Anderson had once told Collignon she only likes to argue for the sake of arguing.

"Regardless, he was right. I did like to argue for argument's sake," said Collignon. "And, thanks to him, today I get paid to argue on a daily basis as a litigation partner in the Denver office of Baker Hostetler LLP."

As friends remember Anderson, they think of his push for perfection, his genuine heart and his love for journalism.

"When you think of Mr. Anderson, you think of how hardwork-

ing and dedicated he was to journalism; he would often stay past midnight to put the paper together," said Nathan Harens. "You think of the pride he had in his students and his writing."

"Mr. Anderson genuinely cared about the people in his life; he made that apparent in the effort he placed on teaching, advising and communicating," said Smith.

Anderson was a teacher with whom students stayed in touch beyond high school graduation.

"I sent him Christmas cards and would visit him at either the school or The Pantry," said Zautke. The Pantry is a store the Andersons own in downtown Yankton.

Many commented on Anderson's big heart but also his even bigger laugh, noting Anderson had an unmistakable laugh that filled the classroom.

"When I think of Mr. Anderson, I immediately think of his classic laugh and that notorious place where his laugh became an absolute high-pitched cackle," said Collignon.

From his notable laughter to his skillful mentorship, his students feel the teachings of Anderson will carry on, even after his passing on Nov. 28.

"He put purpose in everyone's heart that he met," said Zautke.

Those who had the privilege of working with Anderson say he put forth every effort for his students to succeed.

"Mr. Anderson made a huge impact on Yankton High School throughout his 46 years of teaching," said Smith, "and he will sorely be missed by those who had the fortune to have met him."

Y's Words on the YHS Gift Giving Tradition



BY ASHLEY EILERS

Christmas is the season of giving. The students at Yankton High School can get involved in a program called Gift Givers, where you do just that—give gifts. A unique thing about Gift Givers is that it is centered around giving to an entire family, not just an individual member.

Gift Givers was started about fifteen years ago by Kristi O'Connell-Ekroth. When O'Connell-Ekroth was a teacher at Yankton High School, she created the program on a smaller scale where only her classroom students purchased and gave gifts to families.

Over the years, as more and more people have heard about Gift Givers, they thought to make it a program where the entire school could get involved. O'Connell-Ekroth is still a part of Gift Givers today even though she no longer teaches at Yankton High School.

Gift Givers allows both the givers and the receivers to remain anonymous. Each child will receive a piece of clothing and a toy, and the parents will also receive a gift. Gift Givers currently has thirty to forty kids involved. The coordinator of Gift Givers is Ms. Tasa. She puts the lists of families in the library where the students who are involved can decide which items they would like to bring.

Each homeroom not directly involved with Gift Givers may donate items to a food and needs basket for these families. Item that go into these baskets include food and toiletries.

The Y-Club is involved by donating a ham or turkey from Hy-Vee to families.

Gift Givers is a non-fundraising program where people in the community outside of the High School can get involved by giving private donations.

During the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, do not forget to slow down a bit. Count your blessings and see how wonderful it feels to give to those who are less fortunate.

South Dakota State Oral Interpretation Festival Held in Yankton



BY HUNTER KOCH

From Nov. 30 to Dec. 1, Yankton High School hosted the South Dakota State Oral Interpretation Festival.

Hundreds of students from all over the state came to Yankton to participate and compete for superior recognition.

Three students from Yankton received a superior, the highest award possible in this competition.

These three students are Alliyah Greaver with her non-original oratory "Anna Quindlen's Mount Holyoke College Commencement Speech," Juan Skorey with his serious prose piece "The Code," and Garrett Adam with his poetry piece "Story on Page Six."

Alliyah Greaver stated that in order to prepare for this competition, she "practiced reading [her] piece a lot and got coached by Mrs. Mandel and Mr. Kallis, who gave me advice on how to improve."

"I thought I did really well," Greaver said after receiving superior. "I improved a lot since the beginning of the season."

Mr. Kallis and Mrs. Mandel were in charge of setting up the tournament. "I thought the faculty and staff showed great support," Mr. Kallis said. "The custodial group helped us tremendously. I

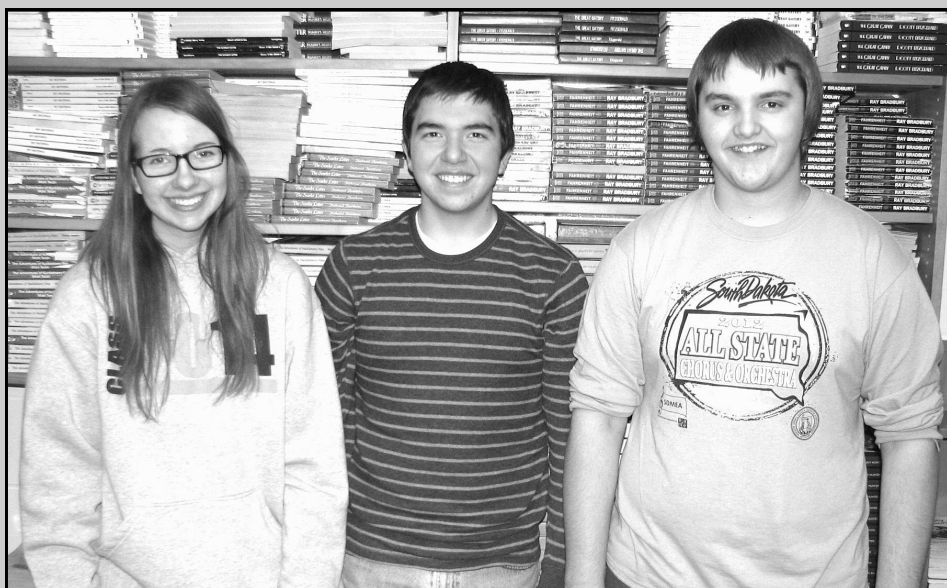


PHOTO BY NICK ROBINSON

Yankton's state oral interpretation superior medal winners are from left to right: Alliyah Greaver in Non-Original Oratory, Juan Skorey in Prose, and Garrett Adam in Poetry.

thought the visiting students behaved admirably."

"I think they did a great job," Mr. Kallis said. "People told me the Readers Theatre performed well. I think we did an excellent job under the pressure of hosting. I thought the inetrp and debaters did great doing the leg-work of this tournament."

Mr. Kallis also wanted to thank the par-

ents who did a great job at the concession stand, the other interpretation and debate coaches who were complementary to our facilities, and the Yankton Convention and Visitor's Bureau who did the hospitality room for the judges and coaches.

Last weekend's state festival marked the end of the 2012 South Dakota Oral Interpretation season.

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