

Always The Teacher

This holiday season we have a great deal to be thankful for: our health, our families, the beautiful Hudson Valley where we live and much more. We do not live in a war zone, we live in peace. We do not watch our children go hungry. We have health care to help our families through illness. We are fortunate to have our jobs and enjoy that security. We are truly fortunate if our job is a passion, a career that is an essential part of our life that we are inspired by and grow from.

We recently lost a very dignified member of the North Rockland teaching community, Thomas F.X. Casey. Of course, he was much more than a teacher. He was a dedicated father and husband. He was a contributing member of his church. He was the President of the Rockland County Historical Society. He was on the Board of the N.R. Federal Educational Credit Union and the Kings Library. Much like you and I, he had a very full and busy life but his essence was being a North Rockland Educator.

I attended Tom's funeral service and nearly every pew was filled with colleagues I've known over the last twenty years. Even in death, Tom continued to teach me yet another lesson. When you choose to become a teacher in North Rockland, you become part of a family. Your job is no longer just a job; it is a lifetime of a professional career and personal responsibility. When you fully start to appreciate that gift, you begin to grasp that your time on this Earth is vital, significant and that you have been blessed.

As I described Tom to my husband, words like "grace," "ethical," "proud," "compassionate," "old school," "intelligent," "diplomatic" and "peaceful" peppered the conversation. Thomas F.X. Casey presented himself daily as a man of honor because that is what, in my mind, he believed being an educator meant. He understood that his influence and his significance rested on his reputation, which meant everything.

Having Mr. Casey in my life was a gift and his death is a great loss. During this holiday season, I pray you will keep his family in your thoughts and keep his lesson of life in your heart. Being a teacher in North Rockland can be much much more than a job if you choose to see yourself as the scholar, leader and influence that you are capable of being. Present yourself as that man or woman daily. You will have chosen a grand and rewarding path

Sincerely,
Robin Brennan

All the best to you and your family!

North Rockland Teachers Association