

Watchung Hills Regional High School Hall of Fame



Wayne Lee

Educator 1969-2009

Wayne Lee was an exemplary teacher of English at Watchung Hills from 1969 to 2009. During his 40 year tenure, Wayne grew a larger than life persona; before long, he was an advocate for students beyond the classroom, and a friend to members of the faculty and administration.

Students and peers voted Wayne as “Teacher of the Year in 2007.” A fitting award for an educator who put the students’ needs above everything. Wayne taught students to find connections and demonstrated how ideas from fiction could translate to the real world. He likened the role of an English teacher to that of a “literary tour guide” whose goal was to excite students’ imagination and foster students’ ability to think critically. After school, Wayne welcomed meaningful connection with students regardless of their age or ability. He listened to students’ concerns before giving advice. Through his calm and professional demeanor, he provided sage advice to all who sought it.

Outside of the classroom, Wayne contributed by suggesting new electives, and writing curriculum. He provided leadership not only to experienced English department members, but he welcomed many new teachers from diverse departments. Wayne advised one of WHRHS’s first DEI initiatives as the founder of the Asian Culture Club. He found the time to teach five classes and also serve on the executive board of the WHREA year after year. As standardized testing necessitated the need for a District Test Coordinator, Wayne volunteered. A member of the first technology committee, Wayne facilitated the integration of computers into our students’ daily lives; he was fascinated with how technology could improve instruction. Additionally, he worked with the media staff members to create a state of the art research lab. The respect administrators had for him was evidenced by his being chosen to serve on the Middle States evaluation team.

Wayne is still remembered for his integrity by his colleagues, his supervisors, and Board members. After retirement, he was an active participant in the life of the school community. His legacy includes gratitude from countless former students who have successful careers in communication and technology, his human touch, his family now led by his wife, Betsy, and their two sons and spouses, and his unwavering loyalty to his colleagues and friends. All of whom still miss him every day.