

CHERYL AYLESWORTH

Cheryl Kostro Aylesworth graduated from DeSoto High School in 1967 and received her education degree from the University of Central Missouri in 1971. She started her teaching career with forty-eight fourth graders in her classroom in the Grandview School District. Fortunately, another fourth grade teacher was hired at semester; Cheryl spent three years there.

In 1974, Cheryl married Jerry Aylesworth, and the couple moved to Cape Girardeau so he could finish his degree. Shortly after arriving in Cape, the Sikeston School District called Cheryl to offer her a job teaching Alternative School. She had a dozen kids with plenty of issues who had never been outside of Sikeston. Of course, Cheryl made it quite a year for those students.

In 1975, Cheryl and Jerry were back in Jefferson County. Cheryl took a job teaching full-day kindergarten in the Douglass Gym for the Festus District. Her years at Festus were three teaching kindergarten and one in fifth grade. She and Jerry had two young sons and a daughter on the way. Cheryl thought it would be a great idea to stay home with the three kids under the age of five. One year later Cheryl was back to work.

Cheryl came to work for the Dunklin R-5 District in 1980. She started at Senn-Thomas, teaching sixth grade for three years. Dr. Smith asked her to be an elementary counselor for Herky and Pevely elementaries. She pursued her counseling degree at SEMO while working in the elementaries and overseeing Special Education. In the mid-1980s, Cheryl moved to the high school as a counselor there along with Herky Elementary.

Cheryl had taken on the role of cheerleading coach; the first in a line of growing extracurricular activities. She would remain their coach until 1998, making quite an impact on how the cheerleaders represented our school. Just as Cheryl's cheerleading coach at DeSoto High thought actions of character spoke louder than mere acrobatic skills, Cheryl taught her cheerleaders to be good ambassadors for the school. She knew they would be front and center for other schools. It was important that the HHS cheerleaders made our school look good.

By the early 1990s, Cheryl was at the high school full time and had become STUCO adviser. She and her students decided to make homecoming a huge event. With the idea of "If we build it, they will come," the homecoming dance started to attract a hefty percentage of students; a legacy that lives on today. Through Student Council and Cheerleading, she worked to build school spirit at a time when the football team was having a run of several years of winning seasons. Cheryl worked tirelessly to get students and teachers to promote good school spirit.

She then decided it was time to better recognize academic achievement. She got the high school involved in Renaissance, a national program to recognize students in all areas of achievement and primarily academic. Through Renaissance, Cheryl started Mr. HHS in 1998, the Lip Sync Contest, and a large end-of-the-year assembly of recognition and lots of scholarship money. She also began a Senior Awards Banquet for all those graduating and their parents. It was an evening where again students would be recognized.

She worked as a high school counselor until 2002. During that time, she served as president of the Jefferson County Counselors Association for one year and was on the Board of Directors of the Missouri School Counselors Association for one year. Cheryl became Herculaneum High School principal from 2002 to 2005. She was the first and only female, thus far, to hold this position. In 2005, she became head principal at Hillsboro High School and retired from there in 2009.

Cheryl came back to serve the Dunklin district on the Board of Education. First elected in 2012, she is presently serving her second term. She continues to work in education, supervising student teachers through the University of Central Missouri and teaching counseling classes at Missouri Baptist University. She and Jerry enjoy their three grown, married children in St. Louis, New York City, and British Columbia, along with their four grandchildren.

Cheryl will forever be known for being the cheerleader; cheering educators to get involved, making student enthusiasm a priority, and working to make our school better than the next school. She always sought the superlatives. Whatever the project or event, she wanted ours to be the best, or the biggest, or the one other schools wanted to emulate. Cheryl, the cheerleader, would cajole and promote; she always had a band of workers around her. With her vision, HHS succeeded in putting on some mighty fine shows and making lots of lasting memories for a great number of our students.