

T. Paul Potts

I was visiting with Bob Fancher a few weeks ago and we started talking about our teachers while we were in school. I attended Manilla school all twelve grades and Bob attended Arlington school all twelve grades. Even though we were considered rivals when it came to sports, in reality both schools were very similar.

The teacher is such an important element of the educational system. In fact, the teacher is the main element. A teacher can make a student want to learn and can be very influential in what the student will do during their lifetime. How can you ever thank a teacher for the guidance they have given and the sacrifices they have made for their students? I am not sure I know how.

Many of us take the teacher for granted. We think they work from 8 to 3 and have the summers off. We think once they have their lesson plan established that they can just follow it and not have to spend much time preparing for class. This is a long way from the truth about what a teacher must do.

A teacher has very little to say about what they earn. In fact, I don't know of a single teacher that teaches for the money. If they wanted to make a lot of money, they would not be a teacher. They are very committed to the students and they feel responsible for the student's success. They spend a lot of hours in addition to the 8 to 3 time period. They have a lot of duties and responsibilities in addition to teaching their class. And now in today's world, they never know who might be coming into the school to create a terrible act. In addition, the students do not show the teacher the respect that we did when we attended school.

With all of that being said, we want to focus on one teacher that taught Agriculture, Shop and Biology at Arlington. T. Paul Potts was one of those dedicated teachers that really cared for his students. Bob told me that Mr. Potts was one of his favorite if not his most favorite teacher during his school years. Bob remembered being on the poultry judging team and how Mr. Potts would work with the team to make them understand poultry and how to judge them in competition. Bob really enjoyed shop class. One year, Mr. Potts taught him to build a coffee table. This was just one project that Bob learned to build over his high school years. When Mr. Potts was building a new house located east of Arlington, he asked Bob and some of his classmates to assist him. This was a great experience for Bob to learn more about building a house. It really became useful when Bob built his house.

Bob shared with me that Mr. Potts was always fair and square. He had a significant influence on Bob. He taught Bob a lot about life as well as Agriculture, Shop and Biology. Many students benefited from the teaching of Mr. Potts.

Bob and Mr. Potts became very good friends after Bob graduated. However, Bob continued to call him Mr. Potts rather than Paul. Bob just had that much respect for him and he could not make himself call him Paul. As I was talking to other Board members of our cemetery, they too

expressed that they continued calling their teachers by Mr., Mrs., or Miss rather than using their first names. We were taught to respect our teachers and to address them as Mr., Mrs., or Miss along with their last name. The result of that training continues today regardless of how old we are.

After Mr. Potts retired, Bob would help him whenever he needed help. Bob would drive him to places he needed to go. He would also help him with repairs and maintenance needed at his house.

Mr. Potts was a big influence on many of the students, graduates and members of the community. He taught at Arlington for many years and touched many lives. We are very blessed to have teachers. If you see one, tell them thank you for being a teacher.

Information was furnished by Bob Fancher.
The story was written by Larry Martin.