

Academic Excellence Recognition Influential Teacher Virtual Speech Verbatim transcription for the media

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Nick Chaney, U.S. Granules, Vice President of Operations, opening remarks:

Hi my name is Nick Chaney and on behalf of US Granules I would like to welcome everyone to the PHS Academic Excellence virtual banquet we would like to congratulate all of the students especially those in the top 5% today that we honor here today. We would also like to congratulate the most influential teachers of those top 5%. We look forward to hearing their speeches and how and why they picked the most influential teacher. We would like to congratulate everybody on a most unprecedented school year and wish them all the best of luck going forward.

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Grace Bougher speaks about most influential educator PHS Art Teacher Faith Hansen transcript below:

Alright, so first before this speech I kind of just want to say no means was this an easy decision for me to make. I think high school is such a pivotal space for growth and kind of deciding who you want to become as a person, and obviously who you surround yourself with really influences how you develop within that space and the conclusions you reach. I want to think of my influential teacher not as someone who's like carrying me to the end of a chapter, but who is really setting me up for success for the start of something greater. Obviously being involved in visual arts I had a lot of classes and spent a lot of time with both Ms. Church and Mrs. Hansen. They both have mentored me throughout my high school career and have offered me so much support. From the very start both of them really advocated for me to work hard and succeed, as well as just offered me lots of great high school memories and fun times to reflect on. However, given not only what she has done for me in terms of support, but how she has inspired me to grow as a person I ended up choosing Mrs. Hansen as my influential teacher. From the moment I entered the classroom she had so much enthusiasm and was just so friendly - and I think just really creates such a welcoming environment for students at PHS. She was always excited about whatever she was teaching us and made sure students were involved in what was happening. I have been with her in multiple classes, including digital design, sculpture, studio art, as well as being a TA for her multiple times over the course of my high school career. In all of these classes, she was really helpful in offering critiques, just giving me advice, making sure I had the right materials, overall just aiding me on my journey and kind of honing in on my style and improving my artistic ability. However, I think obviously the most important part of an influential teacher is not necessarily how they teach, it's kind of how they help you grow as a person, and Mrs. Hansen has certainly had a great impact on that. I think especially in like my freshman and sophomore years especially, I tended to have a hard time coming out of my shell, but the way Mrs. Hansen interacts and approaches her students really made me feel comfortable approaching her for help kind of from the get go. She is always so eager to help students out, as well as showing small photos or videos with us to brighten our day. And she kind of just served as a reminder to me that teachers are people too, and they're not just there to teach you, they're there to help you grow as a person. This really enabled me to come out of my shell a little bit more and kind of come into my own a little bit. And overall just kind of inspired me to make more connections with other people and feel comfortable in that environment. In addition to just being an incredible fun person, she really pushed me to work harder and pursue success where I could. She was the one who really encouraged me to enter into the scholastic art show this year and it was during a time that I was feeling really overwhelmed but she was right there behind me making sure I had everything I needed to get my artwork put together and submitted. And overall I am just so grateful that she was there encouraging me and offering that support. I am really hoping I can continue to grow with that success and continue to make her and Ms. Church proud. Overall I just want her to know that her actions as a teacher kind of create a legacy in whatever her students

decide to go off in... and that her role in that is not unappreciated or unnoticed so thank you so much Mrs. Hansen and I wish you the best.

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Alaina Clady speaks about most influential educator PHS History Teacher Melissa Faulstich transcript below:

To begin today, I would like to express my appreciation for each influential member involved in my educational journey. Whether it be from my teachers, administrators, or parents, I've never gone a day without encouragement and support as I've progressed to the point of being a Plymouth High School graduate. And for this, I thank you all. I've come to realize that one of the greatest lessons a teacher can offer is not based on curriculum, formulas, or methods of effective studying. I've found that the greatest lesson learned in school is not taught by all and doesn't come in the form of a lesson plan. Instead, I've concluded that a teacher is most effective when they lead by example through their demeanor, words and actions, and methods of connecting to students beyond the surface level of acquaintance. When a student observes a teacher who approaches each day with a sense of optimism and a desire to make each day better than the last, they learn not only how to be successful academically, but how to thrive as a decent and kind human in modern society. As I stand here today, I'm honored to say that I've witnessed one of my very own teachers provide these lessons to her students daily, and I can confidently state that Mrs. Melissa Faulstich never goes a day without prioritizing the well-being of her students. I was a student of Mrs. Faulstich's for just a short time during my time at PHS, however, it didn't take me long to notice her contagious happiness and sense of ever-present optimism. Her class became one I looked forward to, not because of the academic content of the course, but because my mood always seemed to brighten when I got to be around her bubbly way of being. Mrs. Faulstich's personality is one to be admired, and I even found myself striving to share the same sense of optimism. She clearly understood the value of a teacher-student relationship, and I know this not only from personal experience but also from observing her interactions with other students. A teacher who approaches each day with a positive mindset, treats everyone as important, and prioritizes bettering the lives of others deserves the utmost recognition, so I am so very honored to stand here today and express my appreciation to my most influential teacher, Mrs. Melissa Faulstich.

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Fernanda Cortes speaks about most influential educator PHS English Teacher Regina Warren transcript below:

Hi everyone! My name is Fernanda Cortes and my most influential teacher is Mrs. Warren. It is with great honor that I am here today to recognize an amazing individual that has inspired me to become the best person I can be. She is a remarkable teacher who cares for her students, and will do whatever it takes to ensure that they succeed. I am speaking in regards to Ms. Warren, a teacher that I've had the privilege of having for the past two years. Now while yes, she has taught me in regards to bettering my reading and writing abilities, she has done far more than that. I won't lie, the first time I walked into her class, junior year, I was extremely scared and nervous. I had heard of how insistent she was with her students, and me, not being the most confident in my writing abilities, was intimidated for that year's class. Nevertheless, she was a welcoming teacher that made sure her students were aware of her obsession with llamas and Abby Lee Miller from the television show Dance Moms. In those heavy times I knew if there was one person that would listen and understand where I was coming from it was Mrs. Warren. She never allowed me to limit my aspirations, and in times where I doubted my own academic abilities, she quickly shut me down and wouldn't allow me to even think of not shooting for the stars in accomplishing my dreams. I can truly say that Ms. Warren was a key component in me accomplishing my goals of being accepted to my school's business program and finding a pathway towards financial stability in my undergraduate career at Indiana University. I could not think of a better teacher to honor and recognize, Ms. Warren has without a doubt been an inspiration for me and has made me not only a better student but human being.

She never failed to make her students laugh and made sure to always bring a positive light to class, even on infamously stressful days such as multiple-choice Monday and timed-writing Tuesday in preparation for the AP Exam. She is truly a wonderful example of a teacher that will do whatever it takes for her students, while at the same time creating meaningful relationships that allow for her students to trust and confide in her. In the timespan I have had Ms. Warren for a teacher, she has been a great supporter of my dreams and aspirations. Whether it was helping me find scholarships or advising me on my college future, she was always there for me. She has never failed to give me her honest advice on both my academic and personal problems. During times of heavy stress, I always knew I could confide in her knowing there would be no judgement attached.

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Mary Catherine Flynn speaks about most influential educator former WSOI Facilitator Jake Singleton transcript below:

First I would like to thank US Granules and Mr. Oliver for allowing us to participate in this banquet and honor someone who during our time as students at Plymouth made a lasting impact on our lives and the lives of others. My most inspirational teacher had the fortune of having me in his class twice. Once in 8th grade humanities and again in AP Microecon. Yes, he was dedicated and took an interest in students' learning experiences. But The reason I chose my most inspirational teacher is because his interests in his students went further than the classroom and his daily lesson plans. His classroom was not always sunshine ,lollipops, and rainbows. But, he was a teacher that cared for his students and their well being. He was also the first teacher to put me in my place because I had disappointed him on a class project. That experience was one that made me realize that more effort would be required in all of my future endeavors because that was an experience I did not care to have repeated in my life. During my time in his AP Microeconomics class junior year I learned more than just about how to read a monopoly graph and to know the effects of supply and demand. I learned that time is money and that just because you do not see the “cow” or the meaning of something at first does not mean that there is not meaning to it. Outside of the classroom my teacher was also very instrumental. He was one of the sponsors for our 8th grade field trip to Washington, D.C. I had an Idea that since it was so expensive to go on this trip, we could maybe come up with a way to raise funds for some of my classmates that could not otherwise afford it. He not only encouraged me but he offered to help as well, by being the adult contact in case potential donors wanted to talk to someone other than a goofy looking 15 year old. With his direction we were able to come up with the funds for someone who would not have been able to go. He pushed me to do things that I normally would not have thought to do. He was a teacher that was in a student's corner whenever we needed him. I'm grateful I had the chance to be in his classroom more than once. I'm grateful he took such an interest in us students. Plymouth Community schools should be grateful they have such a caring student advocate employed within their school systems. These are the reasons I chose Jake Singleton as my most inspirational teacher.

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Andie Kizer speaks about most influential educator PHS Orchestra Teacher Jodi Kallenberg transcript below:

There have been a lot of wonderful teachers who have influenced my life in more than one way. Today, as we honor those teachers who have impacted our lives, I would like to honor the teacher who I thought made the most impact on my life. Today, I would like to honor Mrs. Jodi Kallenberg. To start, I grew up in a musical family, and have always had an interest in music. I did not really know how to play any instruments at the time though. That is why I had an interest in joining the orchestra in the 6th grade. When I picked up the viola for the first time, I was all about wanting to give it a try. I had no idea what I was doing, but I had a great instructor, Mrs. Kallenberg, who helped me, and the rest of my classmates. In fact, it was only Mrs. Kallenberg's first or second year teaching at Plymouth, so we were all new to the idea of starting to grow an orchestra. I grew to love the viola throughout my first year in orchestra. With

my love for the viola, I have enjoyed being in the orchestra ever since. Not only have I enjoyed being in the orchestra because of the viola, but I have also enjoyed being in the orchestra because of Mrs. Kallenberg. Mrs. Kallenberg is a fun and kind-hearted teacher, who has a passion for music. Furthermore, Mrs. Kallenberg is always making us smile. She incorporates fun through not only the music she chooses for us to play, but by the way she has fun with us. She makes us smile by telling us fun stories about her family, by telling us jokes, by showing us fun videos, etc. Through the fun we are also challenged with the music we play. Because Mrs. Kallenberg wants us to be able to grow in our music ability, she pushes us in our music. That has helped me to try my best in rehearsal, and give it my all, that way I can improve in my musical abilities. I have now been playing the viola for seven years, and I have definitely grown in my musical ability with Mrs. Kallenberg's help. Finally, Mrs. Kallenberg has always told us how much she cares about us, and how she is there if we need anything. Our school corporation has gone through a devastating few years of student losses due to suicide. Each time this occurred, Mrs. Kallenberg would take the time to talk to the class, and tell us how much we are loved. She also would be available for us to talk to if we needed to talk. I personally may not have taken her up on that offer, but with knowing Mrs. Kallenberg for a while, I would feel comfortable going to her if I ever needed anything. With many of her students, she has already formed bonds with them like no other. Mrs. Kallenberg has also always been good about interacting with her students, and getting to know them on a personal level. Mrs. Kallenberg's passion for music has shown in her dedication to the music department at PHS. We started off as a smaller orchestra program. Now we have a much bigger group than it has ever been. We now have to have two periods of orchestra at the high school. All of this is because of Mrs. Kallenberg's hard work to recruit new members each year. Without her, the orchestra program would not be what it is today, and I have been changed for the better.

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Kelsey Kruyer speaks about most influential educator PHS History Teacher, her Mother, Laura Kruyer transcript below:

For most students, their interactions with teachers begin and end in the classroom. Once the final bell rings for the day, students and teachers go their separate ways. Now of course, there are the occasional moments where you run into your teacher at the grocery store and share awkward eye contact because you both know that you didn't necessarily do the best on your test last week... But besides those little encounters, there is a very restricted slot of time that teachers and students share together; however, this is most definitely not the case with Mrs. Kruyer and I. My name is Kelsey Kruyer and my most inspirational teacher is my mother, Laura Kruyer. Being a mom means that you have a responsibility to love and care for your children, to nourish and support them throughout their life. Being a teacher means that you have a responsibility to educate the next generation, to build kids into being adults that are ready to make an impact in this world. For my mom, she possesses both of those characteristics but her label goes further than just mother and teacher. She is my advice giver, my number one supporter, definitely my therapist, and most importantly my best friend. My mom is someone that I can always go to, whether that be to gossip about drama at school or to seriously sit down and talk about politics. There are no boundaries when it comes to our relationship mainly because she has always taught me to test the limits which definitely shows because I tend to test hers a lot. I have been fortunate enough to have grown up with a mother that is excellent at everything she does. She is a fantastic teacher that goes beyond just the guidelines but actually ensures success with each of her students and she is an amazing mother that juggles the challenges that come with having five crazy children. Ultimately, my mom is my role model, the person that I aspire to be. So whether I have to address you as Mrs. Kruyer or Mom, I'd like to thank you for everything that you have done for me, from when you taught my first words as a baby to even now, at 18 years old, when you continue to teach me the importance of my voice. So yeah, we definitely don't have to share awkward eye contact at the grocery store about my bad test, mainly because you always end up sitting me down at the dining table and lecturing me about the questions I got wrong and how you thought they were pretty easy even though every other student and I would disagree. But we all

know, you are just preparing us for the challenges that will come after high school. So thank you, Mom, for everything and for being my perfect match for most inspirational teacher. I love you.

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Elizabeth Lee speaks about most influential educator PCSC Teacher Kristy Gawronski transcript below:

Hello my name is Elle Lee and I would like to talk about my most inspirational teacher. There are many teachers who simply do their job and educate their students, but there are other teachers who do their job along with building relationships with their students. Those teachers are the ones that make a lifelong impact on their students' lives. They make them feel as though they belong and are loved. For me, Mrs. Gawronski was that teacher. I couldn't have made it this far from everything I had learned from her and especially how welcomed she made me feel. I moved to Plymouth and began attending Webster Elementary when I was in third grade. I didn't know anyone, but when I walked in to meet Mrs. Gawronski, she welcomed me and helped me feel more comfortable with my new surroundings. I may have been very shy at first, because she could probably tell you that I wouldn't even say my name when I first met her, but I quickly came out of my shell. Though I don't remember my first day of school at Webster, I have many memories that remind me of how much I enjoyed having Mrs. Gawronski as my teacher. I remember inviting her to my Girl Scouts Cake Auction and her buying my St. Patrick's themed cake. Then, while waiting for my dad to pick me up after school that next Monday, we ate the cake in her room. Even though I had sold my cake she still wanted me to get to enjoy it as much as she did. I also remember how she invited everyone in class to come tour her farm, and I had my parents take me because I thought it would make her so happy to have someone there. I did end up being the only one who showed up but she gave me and my parents a personal tour to see everything we wanted to. There was also one day when I got sick and had to go home which meant that I had to miss eating ice cream with the class, so she made sure that she made it up to me later. Mrs. Gawronski is a teacher who values her students inside and out of the classroom. Whenever she sees you at the store or a baseball game, she comes over to say hi and check up on how you're doing. She is a supportive teacher who is always there when you need her. She is dedicated to her students and wants the best for them. Being her student never ends when you leave her class, you are her student for life and she will continue to support and encourage you even though she doesn't see you everyday. Mrs. Gawronski is my most inspirational teacher because without her I would not be the person I am today. By welcoming me as a third grader and continuing to be my fourth grade teacher as she looped up with the class, she was able to continue helping me grow not only in my knowledge, but in my character. She showed me what dedication was and that by doing what you love, it can inspire so many people. This has helped me in finding my passion and sticking to it so that some day I can inspire others the way she did. She demonstrated patience to me by dealing with the craziness of elementary kids. She showed me how to encourage others and how to never give up, because those traits can get you far in life. Along with everything that I have learned through her I have also learned perseverance and know that by working hard you can accomplish so much. Mrs. Gawronski has been an amazing role model and I will never forget everything she's taught me. She is truly an inspirational teacher.

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Alexa Orozco speaks about most influential educator PHS Chinese Teacher Mei Guan transcript below:

Hi, I'm Alexa Orozco and the most influential educator in my life is Ms. Guan. Four years. That's the time span of a presidential term. The time between leap years and the olympics. Or more recently, my high school experience. For me, it was this amount of time that I had the privilege of getting to know Ms. Guan, or as I know her as 关老师 (Guān lǎoshī). One of the traits that 关老师 (Guān lǎoshī) has is that gives herself completely to what she loves. She has raised an extraordinary son, Ray, who excels in many things. I know that he gets it all from his mother and a large part, if not all, is because of her. He was always so humble about it, but my classmates and I know Ms. Guan is a talented woman of many skills.

Her quest for learning new languages has never rested as she currently studies French. She joins Ray and me in tennis whenever possible, most importantly, she makes delicious banana bread. Her curious spirit struck me when we got to know each other better and realized that she and I were the same when it came to pursuing our goals. 关老师 (Guān lǎoshī) has taught me the importance of patience, kindness, and emotional bonds. 关老师 is the Chinese teacher of both Lincoln and PHS and because of that she has to balance her days between both schools. On top of that, teaching her more advanced classes as she simultaneously taught her other ones was a bit of a challenge. However, I can think of no other teacher who would take on that task with as much patience as 关老师(Guān lǎoshī) and for that sole reason, she gave my classmates and I that opportunity to keep learning Chinese. On her kindness, every teacher I have talked to at school agree that 关老师 is one of the kindest human beings. Her pureness is so heartwarming and makes everyone around her smile. 关老师 (Guān lǎoshī) has a personality that you can't help but enjoy to surround yourself with and a great part of that is because of her importance on family bonds. She was always very understanding when I came to my trips to Mexico that would cause me to miss more school days during winter breaks. She understood the importance of seeing your long-distance family whenever possible, so through this I felt that we connected more. 关老师 (Guān lǎoshī) is a teacher I will never forget and always reference back as I continue learning about the Chinese culture and language. Our bond is forged by hours together every day. Our lunches together finishing vocab quizzes, her cooking sessions at her house, or celebrating birthdays during advisories that made us a family. She prepared me for the world outside of high school by treating me as an adult when it came to preparing club activities or classwork, when she asked my input and genuinely wanted it. 关老师 (Guān lǎoshī) created the path for my Chinese 5 classmates and me to keep learning and taught us if the path wasn't there to make it yourself. For that, I know I will continue to find opportunities for myself, thanks to you, Ms. Guan. 谢谢 (xie xie )

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Erin Renneker speaks about most influential educator PHS Teacher Lynette Edmiston transcript below:

Passion. Integrity. Grace. Qualities I look for in a teacher. Mrs. Edmiston is beaming with these amazing characteristics. Her dedication toward her students inspires me. She cares about students who succeed, but also those who struggle. And, in a positive way, she continually encourages everyone to practice in order to improve. Her style of teaching comes with ease, so natural and seamless, makes for a more comfortable classroom. Her graceful way of explaining complex math problems allows for any student to comprehend. I've had the honor to be in Mrs. Edmiston's class, my sophomore and junior years. The first impression was that she was very bubbly, especially at 8 in the morning. If I'm honest, that is what woke me up most of the time. She taught algebra II my sophomore year, which I enjoyed immensely. I loved that she knew every answer to any question students had. In my junior year, I was very thankful to have her for trigonometry - a math class known to be quite rigorous. It came very quickly to me because of her preparation. She made helpful notes as well as tips and tricks to remember hard subjects such as the unit circle. Mrs. Edmiston wanted every student to be challenged and but still succeed. She required every Trigonometry student to remember certain equations in preparation for calculus the next year. This dedication shows that she wanted students to flourish not only in her class but also in all their other courses. Academically, Mrs. Edmiston was terrific! Not only did I have her in class, but I was also her teacher's assistant. It gave me the great opportunity to observe her amazing performance in her other classes, as well. Mrs. Edmiston works as a teacher but is also someone you can talk to about anything. I remember one time my junior year I started to cry in her class. I was overly stressed about my academics. She was very understanding, talked me through my problems, and comforted me. I believe everyone deserves a person who will be there for you when you are at your weakest. Mrs. Edmiston builds

excellent relationships. She is always asking about how your sporting events are going, she knows what days you play, and even comes to events to support you and the other students. She's curious about the students' interests outside of math class. This is what makes her my most inspirational teacher. She has allowed for me to love math with an immense amount of passion. She shows me that, with a good attitude, you can start your day off right. She also demonstrates that having dedication and integrity within one's career will make it that much more fulfilling. I hope that one day I am half the woman Mrs. Edmiston is. Half the mother and half the fantastic human being she is. I want to say thank you. Thank you for pushing me to be my best. Thank you for caring. Thank you for being the backbone of many student's educational careers.

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Hugh Smith speaks about most influential educator PHS Science Teacher Jeff Kindelan below:

When I came into Plymouth High School I followed the footsteps of my older siblings Curtis, and Leah, by deciding to go into the Weidner School of Inquiry. I enjoyed my time in WSOI, particularly my first years, where I was able to develop bonds with many of the other students in my class during our 50 co-taught classes that combined our English and history. But not all of the classes that I wanted to take were available through WSOI. As I reached my junior and senior years I spent increasingly more time outside of WSOI in the traditional side of the building and it was here that I met my most influential educator. I first had Mr. Kindelan my junior year for chemistry II and I had no idea of what to expect. I have never had a conversation with him, or even seen him in the hallway prior to that class. But I soon began looking forward to his class every day for whatever new knowledge he had for us. Mr. Kindelan has excellent ability to connect with his students not only incaptivating them with the class lesson but with life lessons and surprising facts everyday. Every day that I came to this class I would not only learn about the chemistry or physics topic that we were covering at the time but I would learn all types of fascinating stories and facts as well. Conversations range from black holes to climate change and from energy sources of the future to how fiber optics work. Mr. Kindelan taught me to question everything that we have been taught to accept as fact... A rather interesting example of this came one day when the topic of plastic versus paper bag came up in conversation. We've always been taught that paper or cloth bags are better than plastic bags because you can reuse them and they aren't as wasteful or nonbiodegradable like plastic bags. Paper or cloth bags actually require much more energy to produce and transport because plastic bags take less energy to be made and weigh much less than their alternatives, they can be transported much more efficiently than their counterparts. At the end of the day reusing plastic bags is in some aspects arguably more environmentally friendly then even using reusable bags. Lessons like this may not always pertain to physics or chemistry but they really taught me that there is a lot more going on in many situations then we think and one must take into consideration a lot more than what they are told to believe for making an opinion for themselves. As I move forward to college I plan to pursue a degree in The STEM field possibly even physics and I credit this to Mr. Kinderland. But I believe his influences on my ways of thinking on how he most influenced me. He is one of the most knowledgeable, interesting and curiosity inspiring people I have ever met and I am grateful that I was able to have him as my teacher. I will never be able to thank him enough for my time in the past two years but I would like to try. Thank you so much Mr. Kinderland.

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Olive Stanton speaks about most influential educator PHS former Math Teacher Dwight Beguin below:

Hello, I am Olive Stanton and the most inspirational educator in my life is Mr. Dwight Beguin. I had the honor of being one of Mr. Beguin's precalculus and trigonometry students my sophomore year. Mr. Beguin was also aiding the girls tennis team my freshman year. I will say I cannot remember much of precalculus, but I will say I remember Mr. Beguin's sense of humor and jokes that had the potential of taking up more than half the class period. Or when a student fell asleep in class he would scream bloody murder to wake them up and give them a nice scare. My first sentimental encounter with Mr. Beguin was

an emotional one. I had US History right before his class and we had watched a touching video about "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima". Later on, there was discussion about people not standing during the Pledge of Allegiance or the Star Spangled Banner. It got emotional for some of the class including myself. I went on to second hour, precalculus, with Mr. Beguin, still a bit emotional, and he pulled me aside before class started. I explained the situation to him and he delved in on the topic of respect. Respecting others opinions and the freedom we have to express beliefs. It was exactly what I needed to hear as an emotional sophomore girl. I often think of his inspirational words during any argument I am involved in. If any of you know Mr. Beguin, you are aware that he is living his life with his strong faith in honor of his daughter, Nicole, who was taken too soon from Earth. He is a constant reminder that life is too short and that God is always greater. As a fellow Christian, Mr. Beguin's faith and strength speaks to me on a spiritual level and I aspire to be as strong as him during challenging times. Mr. Beguin will forever hold a special place in my heart. Thank you, Mr. Beguin.

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