

NSP OPINION

TOM GOODALL'S RETIREMENT

Everyone's grandpa, dad, and 'the best teacher I ever had'

When I consider how my life is spent, I hardly ever repent - Ogden Nash

Saturday was a marvelous night at the North Scott Fine Arts Auditorium. Not only did we get to see another amazing performance of "Anything Goes," we also gathered to celebrate Tom Goodall's career.

After the show, there was a little fete in the cafeteria, featuring a light roast and several of Tom's beloved Ogden Nash poems. It was an old home night, with lots of familiar faces on hand, including longtime Lancer Productions director Judith Jacobs.

In her speech, current troupe director Stacie Kintigh repeated something she told me a couple of weeks ago: "Tom is my second dad."

Having lost her beloved father quite recently, Stacie's not exactly speaking lightly. But moreover, the sentiment echoes something I heard over and over again when I spoke to Tom's colleagues.

Shakespeare wrote that one man in his time plays many parts. Getting the Lancer Productions staff to describe Tom turned out to be easier asked than answered. As technical director Josh Tipword said, "I don't know how to sum up each interaction, each joke." But he did land, firmly, on "family" as a descriptor.

Assistant troupe director Renae Mohr similarly had a hard time summing up Tom's Tom-ness.

"It's like, he's just Tom. If you had a word – dad – he's just Tom. He's like a dad, he's like a grandfather, he's like the best teacher you've ever had. You know, he's all of that. He's just Tom.

"He's the best. He just makes you laugh. He's got the best dad jokes, and he is so proud of them. He wears a different tie for every show; he's really proud of his ties. Or if he has old LP stuff, he'll wear that. He's very, very proud of all of that. He loves what he does here. He loves being creative. And he loves the kids. He loves teaching them."

Head speech coach Emily Hintze concurred.

"Working with Tom is like working with the best version of a dad, or a grandpa, or a favorite teacher — he is what people need him to be, because he has the experience of teaching to know that all kids are different and need to be met in different places.

"He believes all kids can work in the theater, and he knows we all have different abilities. He is always willing to stop and teach, and he is always forgiving when someone makes a mistake, because learning is filled with mistakes. And he will readily admit when he makes one — because he practices what he preaches, always."

Maddie Harbour, a 2017 North Scott grad, returned to her home theater this year, and co-directed "The Cat in the Hat" and "Anything Goes." She said Tom inspires a sense of joy.

"Tom has always been the person you go to when you need a laugh. He's always there with a compliment on the ready to make you smile."

I admitted when I asked the question, that even I wasn't sure how to sum up Tom's essence, but I think Emily might have come the closest.

"I also truly believe that what sets Tom apart from everyone else is that he truly sees the best in people and is genuinely happy to have people near," she said.

"It is not often that someone sees each and every person for who they are and genuinely, and without a doubt, makes them know and feel important and loved — but Tom does, with everyone. I think that's why none of us can really describe it. How do you best describe genuine love and joy? Maybe with a good dad joke, because it's Tom, but he'll have a better one for you than I would."

After finding out Tom was wrapping up a 53-year career, I found myself thinking about how many lives he's touched in that time. Just thousands of lives, from his elementary classroom to backstage at the theater to being the guy that made sure the music program or dance recital ran smoothly.

And in the time that I've known Tom, and it's been a few years, I've never seen him be anything other than unfailingly kind, polite and patient with every single person he's come into contact with.

High school is a weird and awkward time. But Tom was always someone who



Tom Goodall

"It's like, he's just Tom. If you had a word – dad – he's just Tom. He's like a dad, he's like a grandfather, he's like the best teacher you've ever had. You know, he's all of that. He's just Tom."

Renae Mohr

"It is not often that someone sees each and every person for who they are and genuinely, and without a doubt, make them know and feel important and loved — but Tom does, with everyone."

Emily Hintze

could make you feel less weird and less awkward. He made you feel important and valued, and he was always, always willing to listen. Because at heart, he's a gentleman, and a gentle man.

Someday, I'll tell the story of my relationship with the auditorium as a physical space, but for now I'll say that Tom is tied up with so many of my memories of that place. And I think that's probably true for a lot of people. Furthermore, I'd say that if a lot of us had our druthers, and if it were allowed, we'd name the whole place after him. Because pound for pound, there's no one more associated with that place, and, probably literally, there's no one that's put more blood, sweat and tears into that place, than Tom.

Legacy. What is a legacy? Lin-Manuel Miranda wrote that it's planting seeds in a garden you never get to see. But Tom's gotten to see his legacy every time a young person steps on that stage. Who among us can say we're so lucky?

As I was wrapping up my interview with Tom a couple of weeks ago, he said, "I don't know what I'm going to be when I grow up."

Josh happened to be zipping past at that moment, and he quipped, "Is that ever going to happen?"

Tom sort of chuckled and said, "I hope not. I might get older, but I'll be damned if I'm going to get mature."

Although he may be stepping back to enjoy more of the Iowa skies and his wife's apple pies, pretty much everyone I talked to said they don't think Tom will ever be well and truly out of it. As Josh said, "Next year, if JoAnn needs to get rid of you, give me a heads up, but we'll be here. We'll keep the light on for you."

Dad, grandfather, teacher, friend. Is there an adequate way to sum up Tom Goodall?

Renae joked she's just going to start calling people she loves "Tom." So maybe that's it. Tom's the best. Tom is just love.

Thank you to JoAnn and the rest of Tom's family for sharing him and letting him be a part of our family.

But mostly, thank you, Tom. For everything, for all of it, for just being Tom. The best of all wishes, and, to quote the toast, "May your glass be ever full, may the roof over your head be always strong. And may you be in heaven a half hour before the devil knows you're dead."

Erin Gentz is editor of The North Scott Press. Contact her at egentz@northscottpress.com, or 563-285-8111.

Inside the parent and teacher empowerment house bills

Led by House Republicans, the Legislature has acted on significant measures this session empowering parents while making clear where the lines of control exist when it comes to parental responsibility and school districts' responsibility.

While it is unfortunate that parents were forced to come to the Legislature to defend and reassert their rights to direct the upbringing of their own children, lawmakers have a duty to respond. Whether the issue is school choice, age-appropriate material, invasive surveys or, somewhat amazingly, whether or not schools can keep secrets from parents, House Republicans have led the way.

This bill includes these things:

- Age-appropriate language: Schools cannot have any curriculum or books that are not age appropriate. Age appropriate is not a description or visual

depiction of a sex act as defined in 702.17.

- Transparency: District must publish their book or educational material removal policies and board decision review policies on their websites. District must adopt policy for residents of the district and those who open enroll to review instructional materials and include process for students to not be provided with certain materials.
- Access to online library
- Identity of parent/guardian who requests removal must be kept confidential.
- Students cannot be on book review committees.
- Parents' rights language: Parents have the ultimate responsibility, and the fundamental, constitutionally protected right, to make decisions regarding the entire upbringing of their child.
- SEL survey language: Must get parental consent prior to giving surveys, parental access to surveys, who created/sponsored the survey, how the data is used, and how the data is stored.
- Special education/homeschool language: AEA does not need to give consent before a special education student can receive CPI, and a special education

CPI student may dual enroll.

- Gender identity/sexual orientation instruction prohibited in K-6.
- AIDS and HPV/HPV vaccine as specific STDs or communicable diseases removed from being listed out in Code (does not prohibit instruction on these things).
- A school cannot knowingly give false or misleading information to a parent/guardian regarding the student's gender identity. If a student requests an accommodation for a gender identity different than their sex at birth, the teacher must report to the administrator and the administrator contacts the parent/guardian.
- Adds in HF 429 which is our intra-district enrollment language. This allows parents to change the attendance center of their child in cases of bullying and harassment.

Senate amends teacher empowerment

The one piece that had yet to be approved by the Senate was teacher empowerment (House File 604). Teachers need the ability to control their classrooms and protect rule-abiding students from disruptive and potentially violent students. Teachers deserve to

know why they are being forced to take certain kinds of training. On Wednesday, HF 604 was amended and approved by the Senate. While the Senate weakened the bill's effort to give teachers direct and clear disciplinary measures to maintain control of their classrooms, it is still a step forward. Key pieces of the bill include:

- The district must provide the Code section or rules adopted by the State Board or the BOEE that requires the employee to participate in the professional development program.
- The district must provide notice of teacher immunity in regards to coming in physical contact with a student.
- Teacher must notify the parent/guardian within 24 hours if they witness student injury.
- Includes teacher whistleblower protection.

Together, parents, teachers, and the districts can all work together to create the best school that does the best for the students and families.

Rep. Luana Stoltenberg, R-Davenport, represents Iowa House District 81. Contact her at Luana.Stoltenberg@legis.iowa.gov.



Rep. Luana Stoltenberg
District 81

