

## Legacy

### Maureen Hauswald

Maureen Hauswald graduated from UW-Stevens Point in 1979 with a degree in elementary education. She started her journey as an educator teaching sixth grade at Big Spring Elementary in the Wisconsin Dells School District. In 1987, she married AFHS teacher Pat Hauswald, settled in Friendship, and completed her master's program. For the next 12 years, she commuted to Big Spring and later to Neenah Creek Elementary in Briggsville.

During her twenty years in the Wisconsin Dells School District, Maureen had the privilege of working with exceptional colleagues. As enrollments declined in rural areas, change was inevitable. Maureen, along with her co-teacher Susan Johnson and para educator Cheryl Coon, saw this as an opportunity to create an intermediate unit for students in grades four, five and six. They believed in teaching students rather than focusing on grade levels. While at Neenah Creek, Maureen began collaborating with student teachers and interns. Although she missed her sixth graders when the intermediate unit was reorganized to a grade three, four and five unit, she developed a new interest in mentoring aspiring educators. When given the chance to complete coursework at Edgewood College in Madison, she pursued a certification program in the principalship and curriculum/ instruction, which she completed in 1999.

Elementary principal positions opened in the Adams-Friendship School District in spring 1999. After 20 years with the Wisconsin Dells School District, she applied for and accepted a position as principal at Castle Rock Elementary with district responsibilities for curriculum and instruction.

Maureen shared, "Everyone has a home they were born to—mine was in rural Taylor County. There are often 'in between' homes during the young adult years or childhood and retirement. Other times, generations reside in the same community for their lifetimes. There are also homes you choose because there's a sense of belonging. The Adams-Friendship community has been my chosen home for the past 38 years."

Maureen highly valued her 15 years with the A-F School District, collaborating with administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the Board of Education. She had considered pursuing a doctorate and an opportunity arose. Both Maureen and Superintendent Steve Lavallee were invited by Edgewood College's doctoral committee to join the inaugural cohort in Educational Leadership. They graduated from the three-year program in December 2004.

Maureen claims that she became an educator over 60 years ago. If you do the math, this requires an explanation. "I began my work in education as a volunteer over sixty years ago. I utilized observation skills to complete tasks efficiently. I assisted students who were off task to ensure timely completion of their work. I organized teaching materials for accessibility. When the teacher needed help locating manuals and supplies, I provided assistance. During recess supervision, I sometimes required the teacher's support to maintain proper behavior among students."

"I understood my role, though the teacher **did not** always appreciate my efforts."

"I was six and a tad bit overbearing—clearly, becoming an educator was my purpose. My early 'leadership skills' foreshadowed my calling to pursue administration."

As a classroom teacher, one of Maureen's favorite activities was reading chapter books to her students. In one particular book, the main character was advised to use her weaknesses to solve a problem. The character was puzzled but eventually came to understand that *greatest weaknesses can also be someone's greatest strengths*, just as their *greatest strengths can also be their greatest weaknesses*. This realization helped Maureen to reframe first grade bossiness into adult leadership, positioning herself for a role where she could work effectively with both adults and children.

When Maureen was principal, Castle Rock Elementary was identified by UW-Madison as a high performing high poverty school. She was contacted by UW-Madison and invited to be included in a study regarding systems that promote success. Initially, she was shadowed by a research assistant who joined her for a District School Improvement Team (DSIT) meeting, a committee she chaired. This led to further observations at the district level and at individual schools. Observations of various systems suggested that stakeholder involvement in district and site teams correlated with performance. Superintendent Steve Lavallee often reminded educators that teaching doesn't count if students don't learn, a principle that shaped district philosophy. As DSIT's chair, Maureen facilitated systems of collaboration among teachers and administrators related to curriculum, assessment, grading for learning, and accreditation. Eventually this group was involved in early discussions leading to the establishment of the A-F Academic Hall of Fame.

Maureen credits the collaborative nature of the Adams-Friendship School District for transforming the leadership skills of a first grader into an adult philosophy of servant leadership. When asked to define servant leadership, Maureen responded, "Servant leadership means being willing to do the same thing or more than you ask others to do. It means remembering who you are—once a teacher always a teacher. Servant leadership means people do not work for you they work with you."

As she neared retirement, Maureen became more active in the A-F Educational Foundation. She worked with other members to utilize social media and eventually a web page. After working with a core Academic Hall of Fame Committee, she presented the idea at a Foundation meeting. With their approval, a process was developed, and the first induction was held in the spring of 2014. In the past ten years, the process has been refined to include a more focused ceremony due to a partnership with the A-F Alumni Association.

As the A-F Hall of Fame grows, the inductee stories are told and remind us that great success is not limited to large school districts. With good role models, hard work, support, and dedication, students from small communities can accomplish big things.