



Lee E. Yunker

Mathematics Leadership Award

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EXCEPTIONAL
TEACHER
OF MATHEMATICS

Lee Yunker was the Mathematics Department Chair at Community High School District 94, West Chicago for 31 years. He was a recipient of the Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics T. E. Rine Award, and the Distinguished Life Membership Award. He was an active member of numerous ICTM and NCTM committees.

Lee served on the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Board of Directors during F. Joe Crosswhite's presidency and was a proponent of the NCTM Curriculum and Evaluation Standards in 1989. Lee co-authored the book *Fractals for the Classroom* with Hienz-Otto Peitgen; it has been published in 13 languages. As well, Lee co-authored a geometry textbook that has been used nationwide and a pre-calculus book, *Advanced Math Concepts*.

Lee led by his own example, and taught others the humility required to lead and teach others. Ever-passionate about school leadership and reform, and a leader and supporter of the growth of others, Lee died from brain cancer in October 1994, at the young age of 53. His legacy is apparent in the work and passion of the hundreds of ICTM members who knew and worked with him.

Lee Yunker was my first department chair. Needless to say I was very excited about my first job as a teacher. One day I asked Lee, "When are you going to come in and see me teach?" Lee responded, "don't worry I'll set up a time to do a formal evaluation on you, but just remember that I get first hand information every night at dinner." Lee's daughter Lisa was one of my students. -Bob Urbain

Lee grew up on a dairy farm near Mokena. He had one brother who was a middle school teacher. Lee was always willing to help anyone in need. Lee loved to attend math conferences. The administrators in his school were very receptive to Lee's ideas. -Alan G Foster

Lee Yunker took time to engage with me during a break in the action at Bismarck. Despite my greenhorn status, he treated me as an equal, provided me support and inspiration, and introduced me to other professionals, including Al Foster! I will not ever forget the effort he made that day to bring me in. I'm forever grateful. -Roger Day

When he was a department chair, Lee encountered resistance from his principal about releasing teachers from classes to attend ICTM. He solved the problem by inviting the Principal to attend the conference as his guest. When the principal saw first hand how much could be gained by attending, he gave Lee a free hand to take as many teachers as he could from then on. Lee was a problem-solver of the highest order. -John Benson

I learned an important lesson from Lee even after his passing: Al Foster told a funny story about a time that he and Lee and Jerry Cummins shared a hotel room at a conference. Lee was speaking and set his alarm so he could get up early to practice his talk. He inadvertently set the clock to 2AM but didn't notice and was practicing away when one of his roommates noticed the time. I remember being struck by the fact that Lee Yunker, an NCTM Board member with tons and tons of experience, still had to practice. It taught me something about what it takes to be a pro. -Sue Brown

Lee Yunker is a man I hold in the highest regard. I began my teaching career under his leadership and could not have had a better mentor and role model. His integrity was beyond reproach, and his commitment to mathematics education was unparalleled. -Bob McCollum