



2012 Writing Competition

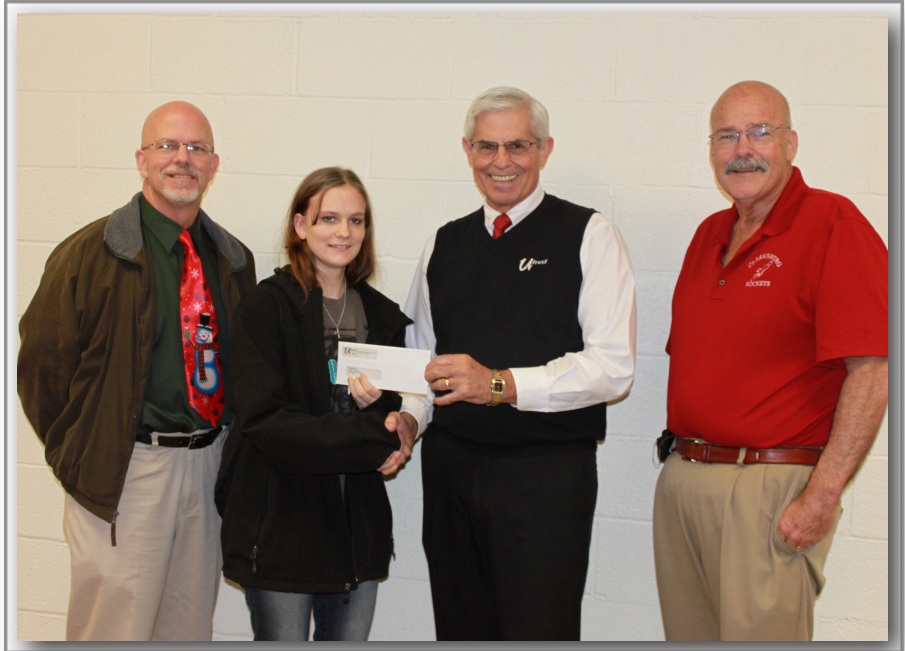
Changing My Future Starting with a History Teacher

By Dana Bombe

Award Winner

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My name is Dana Bombe, and this is my story of a teacher who taught me many valuable lessons. My 8th grade year I met a history teacher name Mrs. Jeannine Stokes. Little did I know this woman was going to change how I behaved which changed the path of my future. I used to be very mean, disobedient and very unruly. I didn't care about school. I just wanted to hurry up and get out with a degree so I could move on and do what I wanted in life. Of course at the time, that was hanging out with friends, playing video games, eating and sleeping all day...your basic lazy kid.

Sitting in the back with friends and talking all class got me nothing but an F. Mrs. Stokes is the kind of woman who believes in everyone. By that I mean she believes anyone can do anything as long as they put their mind to it and hard work in it. Mrs. Stokes will encourage you and have you put your best foot forward, standing behind you no matter what. She pulled me to the side after class one day and talked to me about how much she believes in me and knows I can do it. If there was ever a teacher that made me feel so good about myself that I actually cried, it would be Jeannine Stokes.

After the talk I actually cut back on my talking (after she would yell at me a few times about it) and started trying. I began to pass the class for a while. Then I had a downfall you could say. I went back to my normal routine of talking during class and not paying attention. I even started falling asleep. Yet again, she pulled me to the side and talked to me, explaining that it hurts her to see one of her students she really believes in and sees good in, to be doing bad in her class.

Mrs. Stokes can make you laugh about anything sometimes not even intending to. It can be just the way she talks. When she tells you to sit down she may say "Plant your booty in a seat" or "If your booty leaves that seat again, I'm going to glue it down". One thing I learned not to say around her was the word "If". Before you could even finish the sentence, her comeback would

be “If a frog had a glass booty”. I was always getting up in her class and getting yelled at that she would glue my booty to a seat if I got up again.

She kept me in line by showing humor with her strictness. She isn't even all that strict but she can teach you the difference in when it's time to goof off and time to be serious. Proof she wasn't so strict is when we worked on something like book work, homework or even just busy work, she would ask the class if we wanted to hear music. The first time she did that everyone was thinking rap or country, some (like me) even rock music. Instead, she played The King/Elvis Presley or any oldies but goodies. There are quite a few that stuck with me.

Mrs. Stokes could of course be easily replaced but only as a teacher, not as a friend. That's what she is to me and many others, not just a teacher but a friend. If you need help with school or outside school or even just someone to talk to, Mrs. Stokes is your woman. Just don't talk bad about Elvis.

Mrs. Stokes is a very kind hearted woman. She has taught me that I can do better than what I am doing while still having fun. I love to have fun and enjoy my time with friends, and she taught me that I can do that and still be better than who I was. If there is ever going to be a teacher I will miss from high school, it will be her.

Mrs. Stokes, I know I must give you a copy of this letter so as you are reading it I just want to say, “You are an amazing woman, teacher, and friend. Thank you for everything you have shared and taught me. I consider you to be one of the closest women in my life, whom include people like my mom and sisters. You know you are very important to me. I don't know where I would be without you. Well, actually I probably do and it wouldn't be good. I love you”.