

Autumn Washington

NOMINATED BY ANYA HARDEN

As the daughter of a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, Anya Harden has attended many schools. At times she felt misunderstood, but she found a friend in Autumn Washington, her math and science teacher at F.H. Jenkins Preparatory School in Nashville, Tennessee. That's why Harden nominated Washington, who taught her from fifth through eighth grades, as her favorite teacher.

"She really cared about us and she was like an auntie," said Harden, now a 10th-grader at Bass Memorial Academy in Lumberton, Mississippi. "She was really relatable. She took the time to understand me."

Harden especially appreciated Washington's patience while teaching math. "I struggled, but she understood that for me the concept has to click in my head before I can get it," she said. "It's not that I'm dumb, it's just that it takes a lot more time for me to get a concept, and once I get it, I'm okay."



Washington also encouraged Harden's love for writing poetry, which led to her work being published.

"I did great under her; I flourished and she always pushed me to do my best," she said. "I felt that she loved me, as well as all

the other students. She was just an overall great teacher."

Washington said Harden is a talented, wonderful student, whom she enjoyed teaching over the years.

"I try to make every student feel individually special," she said. "It's important to cater to their individual needs."

Washington graduated with a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Oakwood College in 2002. In 2006, she obtained a master's degree. She is pursuing a doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction, with an emphasis in math learning disabilities.

"I am shocked and surprised," she said of her favorite teacher nomination. "It means some of the things I've been doing are effective, and that it's important to continue pouring into our youth. Our actions are being observed, whether we realize it or not, on a daily basis."

Ray Hefferlin

NOMINATED BY CLIFTON KELLER

In 1955, shortly after graduating from the California Institute of Technology, Ray Hefferlin accepted a fulltime teaching position at Southern Missionary College. He and his wife, Inelda, lived in campus housing.

"Ray rode his bike with lesson plans, books, and graded papers lashed with belts to the buddy seat or handle bar," recalled Clifton Keller, one of his students, in his favorite teacher nomination. "Since Talge Hall was in line between his office in Hickman Hall and home, he frequently stopped to chat, go into the dorm, and remind a student to be faithful in schoolwork, or to loan publications."

Hefferlin's hard-to-find specialized books and reprints were a necessity as students began to study subatomic particles and interactions among them, according to Keller. From creative use of laboratory equipment made from Army Surplus, their studies morphed

into publishable research.

"Near sundown Friday, Ray might stop to ask, 'Are you ready for Sabbath School?' or give something designed to give depth to his Sabbath School class," he wrote of his late professor. "He was known to give cookies or play a prank such as, 'Be ready to talk about Hezekiah, Chapter 4.' To know exactly what was expected made me go beyond just reading the lessons.

"To use creativity and to dig deep into my studies are the most important lessons I learned from Ray Hefferlin," Keller concluded. "Earning his Ph.D. from CalTech, inspired by Linus Pauling and other great atomic scientists, Ray translated the knowledge he gained from their work to his students. He loved God, and chose to be a teacher rather than obtain worldly riches and acclaim."



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