

Four St. Francis teachers retire

Four teachers retired at the end of the school year after each having spent more than 30 years teaching in the St. Francis schools.

Scott Carmichael retired as the principal of schools, Julie Wolters as the sixth

grade teacher, Lyn Wiley as the vocational agriculture, careers, driver's education and FFA adviser; and Mary Beikman as the art teacher for all grades.

Mrs. Wolters came to St. Francis the fall

of 1976; Mr. Wiley arrived in 1981 and Mrs. Beikman and Mr. Carmichael came to St. Francis in the fall of 1982.

Read their stories on this page.

Teacher enjoys having family home

Sixth grade teacher, Julie Wolters spent her first week retirement with all of her family home for the first time in one and one-half years. While her sons, Mike and Tyler, are special, she was especially delighted to have her new granddaughter spend some time.

Mrs. Wolters came to St. Francis in August of 1976 where she spent the first year living in Wilma Lampe's basement. She hadn't always planned to teach as she started out as a music major at Fort Hays State University.

There were teaching jobs just about everywhere. She changed her major to education.

Besides, she said, I liked kids! She met Carl Sperry, St. Francis Schools superintendent, at a job fair at the university. At the time, he had only a sixth grade position available.

I had gone to Colorado for a few days at the end of July with some friends, she said. Mr. Sperry called my folks to arrange an interview with me for a fourth grade position.

"My dad told me that if he offered me a job, to take it - so I did!" she said.

She taught fourth grade for one year, then moved to second grade where she taught for many years. She taught kindergarten for a year then moved to sixth grade where

she finished out her career.

Through the years, there were enough students that there was a need for two classes. Her biggest class was her last class and there were 30 students. Her smallest class was 15 students. She taught second grade with Jennifer Krien and sixth grade duties were shared with Bruce Swihart. She worked under administrators, Carl Sperry and Velma Zimbelman (both had hired her), as well as Carl Werner, Larry Gabel, Rob Schiltz and Scott Carmichael.

When she was teaching second grade, she taught "whole language" activities and Thematic Units. In sixth grade, she and Mr. Swihart did team teaching in social studies. Those, she said, were the methods I enjoyed the most. Technology has enhanced the way we teach today.

Every teacher has special happenings. For Mrs. Wolters, it was being able to teach her own children. She also said she loved all the teachers and staff she has worked with over the years.

"I enjoyed working with the students and coming up with new activities to reinforce skills I was teaching," she said.

"I will miss the kids and the staff!"

Her plans for retirement include traveling with her husband, Greg.



JULIE WOLTERS, sixth grade teacher, worked with one of her students before school let out.

In the near future, they plan trips to San Francisco, Kansas City and Boston.

"I also plan to spoil our new granddaughter!" she said.

I love working in my yard. I like to knit and read. And, I have some closets that been calling me for the last 37 years. I plan to be busy! she said.

Man knew he wanted to teach

After 32 years teaching, Lyn Wiley retired as the vocational ag teacher, careers teacher, driver's ed teacher and FFA advisor.

"I think always wanted to teach," he said.

He and his wife, Cindy, worked after finishing two years at Colby Community College. They were married for a year when they decided, that if they could get financial aid, they would go back to school.

We were both able to go at the same time as we said, if one of us went and the other didn't, then one of us might not finish. And, they both went on to graduate in 1981 with teaching degrees from Kansas State University and were hired at the St. Francis schools.

Lyn noted that technology changed a lot through the years but he especially noticed that there were a lot of requirements that were changing the schedules of students that would like to take vocational classes. Due to this, he said, non-elective classes such as vo ag are taking the hit. It has greatly hurt enrollment in this area.

Vo ag, he said, allowed students who were maybe not book students or an athlete, an avenue to be the best they could be in another area - mostly by working with their hands. I had students do very well in the shop areas.

Growing up, Mr. Wiley was involved in 4-H and FFA. He carried this knowledge with him into the FFA program in St. Francis. He had some judging teams that did very well at the state and national level.



NATIONAL WINNING LIVESTOCK JUDGING teams were highlights for Lyn Wiley, back right. FFA team members were (l to r) Troy Faulkender, Alan Jones, Greg Cooper and Mike Bandel.

"I had several great kids on judging teams," he said. "I think the world of these kids and they hold a special friendship with me and my family."

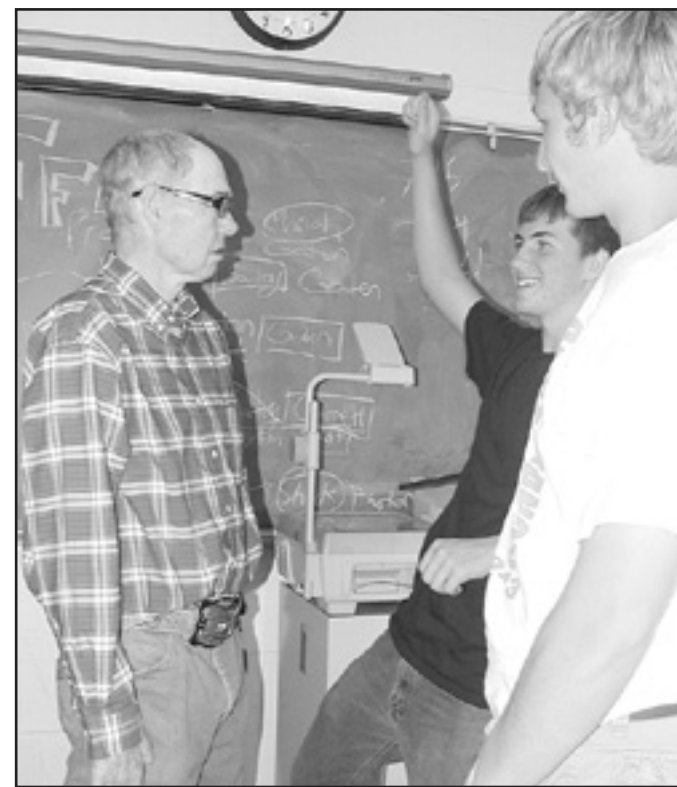
"When I first started, girls really were not involved. I have had some great girls and they did very well. I am proud of all of the kids."

The teams were able to travel to Kentucky, Denver, Kansas City and Scotland. These were highlights in my career, he said.

When asked if he had the opportunity, would he chose to teach? The answer was, "Yes, I would!"

Lyn was born and raised in Fort Scott and graduated from Fort Scott High School. Cindy teaches third grade and they have two sons, Dustin and Darin.

LYN WILEY, left, jokes with students, Matt White and Kyler Zwegardt.



Art teacher loved what she was doing

Mary Beikman said she was encouraged to chose to teach art early on by her mother and her first art teacher. I remember, as a small child, Mother always making a simple, everyday something, so very special.

"She always made time, how I don't know, to let my siblings and me create," she said.

"There were the many flower and animal drawings, hay and snow forts, those beautiful paper doll dresses, making glue from flour and water - even our pancakes were special with different shapes for all five of us."

"Mom could take a little bit of nothing with a whole lot of love and patience and make something wonderful. She was truly blessed with God-given talents and has always been my mentor."

When Mary entered school, it was a one-room country school called Round Top. The public art and music teachers came out every Friday.

The art teacher was Mr. Fisher. He was my forever hero, Mary said. I don't think I ever missed art, sick or not. I remember making trivets for Christmas gifts that year. All of those beautiful tiles - I thought they were like jewels. Needless to say, Mom

loved them all as there were four of my siblings who each made one.

In first grade, she said, I knew that someday, I would be the next Mr. Fisher!

She continued to have art in her grade and high school years, loving art class and working with students as an aide. That is when she decided to get the best of both worlds and become an art teacher.

In working with children as an aide in her high school classes, she said she was able to see and understand that a child at any age, with or without special needs, is faced with social and environmental issues but they could be successful in their art.

"This was an area in which I felt very passionate about and wanted to be a part of," she said. "Working with children and knowing that each child would be as unique as the art they created was my goal."

"A favorite quote that has guided me over the years was by Albert Einstein, 'Creativity is intelligence having fun!'"

Children of the past and of today, she said, have been a huge part of my life these past 31 years. Each day was a new adventure, always eventful and very rewarding.

Some of the highlights through the years include the smiles, hugs, the children in full throttle when they hit the door to build,

draw, paint or whatever they were working on.

The art shows, she said, were like harvest time - laying each child's work out, looking over the year's hard work, and thinking, "this is amazing!"

She said she liked the energy in the room on game days, vacations, the famous Thanksgiving dinner, the laughter, seeing someone hug their classmate because they were in despair about cutting off their lion's tail accident.

"As the saying goes - I could write a book."

"I am certain my life is fuller for having been a teacher," she said. "Thanks to all the awesome children over the years for the opportunity to be a part of such a wonderful adventure."

Her next adventure, she said, is to enjoy, kick back and to do whatever comes her way!

She plans to follow the activities of her children, Mariah and Martin, and help husband, Andy, in his parts store. She also wants to go through pictures, travel home to Beloit to see her family and friends, tackle projects that she has put on hold and, just let the good time roll! "Happy trails!"



SCOTT 'HOAG' CARMICHAEL wrapped up some loose ends on his computer before he left the principal's room.

Principal always planned to teach

"It's been good!"

Always positive, always looking for and seeing the best in students and staff - that is Scott Carmichael. That may have been one reason kids loved him in special education. And, when he became the principal, most of the kids continued to have the same affection and support.

And, would he come to St. Francis and be a teacher and principal again?

"You bet ya!" he said.

Mr. Carmichael, or Hoag, or Hoagie, as we was often called, was born in St. Francis. He moved with his family to Sterling, Colo., where he graduated from high school in 1977. He got a football scholarship at Kansas Wesleyan in Salina and graduated with a teaching degree as well as an endorsement in health and physical education. He later earned a master's degree in administration from Fort Hays State University.

It was while he was at Kansas Wesleyan that he learned about people with special needs. As a sophomore, he worked with low-functioning adults. He said as he cared for them, he saw their love and needs.

His coach and advisor encouraged him to go into teaching and special education. He interviewed at St. Francis and got the special education position teaching with Norma Weems (one of the best, he said).

While he loved teaching and being a principal, his passion was sports, especially football. He was an assistant and head football coach along with coaching and-or assisting junior high wrestling, junior high basketball and high school track. He also was one of the coaches in the weight room for 28 years.

Highlights of his career included seeing the football team break a 38-game losing streak by beating Oakley in 1983; seeing the track team take state in 1992, working with football coach Tim Lambert for 15 years and seeing the teams make the playoffs and seeing the wrestling team win three state championships.

Through the years, he said, I have enjoyed knowing and teaching the kids as well as building good relationships with the staff. He said what he least liked was the lack of tolerance in teachers.

As a principal in both the high school and elementary, he saw teaching and kids in a different light. This experience, he said, was invaluable.

St. Francis kids, he said, were the best. Whenever I traveled with them, whether it was music, class trips or athletics, people commented on how well behaved and polite they were. They didn't let the school or community down!

During the 31 years he taught, Hoag said one of the biggest changes he saw was the lack of control in the schools on the local level. The state and federal government just kept stepping in with new regulations for teaching.

"Today, the federal government dictates what needs to be taught," he said, "when in reality, we, at the local level know what is best for the kids."

Even though he is retiring from St. Francis schools, he will continue to work with the Northwest Kansas Education Service Center by teaching credit recovery classes and General Educational Development (GED) classes. This summer, he is doing some crop adjusting with Mike Weber (his first football quarterback).

Hoag has had some ups and downs with health issues and was one of lucky ones to overcome pulmonary fibrosis. At that time, he said, I was one out of five at Mayo Clinic with the disease. The other four didn't make it. I was the lucky one.

He figures his luck has been with him through the years. I have wonderful wife, Dara, my son, Lucas, and my parents (Bill and Neala Carmichael) have moved back to St. Francis, he said. I have been able to teach and live in St. Francis, a town that I love, and I have had a great career.

"All in all, it has been a whale of a good time."



MARY BEIKMAN helps one of her students with an art piece.