



CARMEL CLAY SCHOOLS

5201 East Main Street, Carmel, Indiana 46033 • Telephone: 317.844.9961 • Fax: 317.844.9965 • www.ccs.k12.in.us

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Contact: Courtney Taylor
Community Relations Liaison
ctaylor@ccs.k12.in.us, 317-844-9961

Carmel Clay Schools Honors Educator Mark Weaver with ‘Weaver Woods’ Dedication

Carmel, IN – The Carmel Clay School board re-named the Clay Middle School on-campus outdoor ecology lab, “Weaver Woods” to honor retired Clay Middle School science teacher Mark Weaver. In attendance was Indiana State Congresswoman Donna Schaibley, who, on behalf of Governor Eric Holcomb, surprised Mr. Weaver with the prestigious Sagamore of the Wabash Award. Mr. Weaver is now a two-time recipient of the award for his contributions to the Hoosier state.

Weaver, who retired in 2018 after 36 years in education, was recognized for influencing the lives of thousands of students at Clay Middle School with his unforgettable hands-on curriculum and real-life learning experiences.

“Mark Weaver’s love of science was legendary at Clay Middle School,” said Indiana State Congresswoman Donna Schaibley. “The innovative way in which he transmitted his knowledge and his passion for ‘all things science’ on to his students set him apart and made him such an exemplary teacher. Very few individuals receive the Sagamore of the Wabash Award even once in their lifetime and it is an honor to be here tonight to present him with his second award.”

For decades, Weaver made science memorable for students, not only with his colorful and quirky science themed suit ties, but through the ways he immersed creativity, imagination and colorful storytelling through each lesson. Students looked forward to The Great Explorers and Survival Week, a weeklong adventure that combined Indiana history, the environment and tips on how to survive in the wild. The event culminated with a giant feast of “survivalist” foods, including roasting a pig head over an open fire pit and allowing students who wanted to sample cooked crickets and teas made from various roots.

“Mark is a one of a kind educator,” Mr. Todd Crosby, Clay Middle School Principal, explained. “When I think about the lives he has touched in his 36 years as an educator, I feel blessed to have been a small part of his journey.”

In 1988 under his leadership, middle school students transformed a neglected drainage area next to Clay Middle School into an outdoor ecology laboratory. That ecology lab continues to flourish as a place where students study the microscopic organisms living in the pond, identify native and invasive species, and conduct water testing in both the spring and fall. Weaver is also credited with creating the Clay Middle School Naturalist Club, a club where students enjoy exploring caves, visiting regional zoos, partaking in birdwatching activities and raising funds for local wildlife rehabilitation centers.

“Charismatic, passionate, dedicated, imaginative and kind are just a few of the words that students and fellow colleagues have used to describe Mark,” said Layla Spanenberg, Carmel Clay School Board President. “He is a remarkable educator who has made profound impact on our CCS students and made learning fun for everyone. The Board is delighted to honor Mark and celebrate his legacy.”

Tonight’s recognition follows a long list of prestigious awards for Weaver including being inducted into the National Teacher’s Hall of Fame in 2011, earning the title of Indiana State Teacher of the Year in 2004 and being honored with the Sagamore of the Wabash Award by Governor Joe Kernan in 2003. In 1996, Weaver received the IPL Golden Apple Award and used the grant money to travel to Manitoba, Canada to observe the polar bear migration, an experience he shared with his students via phone and computer.

Weaver earned his Bachelor of Science in Botany with a certificate in Education in 1981 from Butler University and earned his Masters Degree in Education from Butler University in 1983.

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