



## People Make the Difference

Mr. Brad Cooley, Principal, Norwalk High School

Woody Hayes, longtime football coach at The Ohio State University, wrote the book, *You Win with People*. His message focused on the importance of building strong personal relationships with his players both on and off the football field. He emphasized the need to attract quality people to his campus – great athletes of course, but also those who had impeccable character and integrity. Woody's premise of surrounding yourself with the right people mattered; it mattered in the past, and it definitely matters today.

High character individuals were inducted into Norwalk High School's 2016 Hall of Fame class. While you may have read the biographies of Robert Chappellear, Janet Conway, Jim Gregory, Jeff Phillips, John Schroeder and Skip Wilde, unless you were at the banquet, you may have missed the most compelling part of their stories.

Janet's daughter and the five other recipients were invited to the podium to offer their acceptance speeches. Through the laughs, the tears, the pauses, the quivering chins and that unmistakable fire in their eyes, a clear message was delivered: Other people had blessed their lives and made it possible for them to achieve a high level of success.

Rarely using the word "I," each Hall of Fame recipient talked about a parent, a coach, a teacher, a teammate, and a community that had supported them, even when the odds were not always in their favor. While such selfless acts of support and motivation may have seemed trivial at the time, each person that evening clearly knew who to thank for being the right person at the right time.

The genuine nature of their accounts were awe-inspiring, namely because it forced many of us to reflect on our own past and to think about the ones who have and who continue to play a significant role in our lives. Was it your teacher, your coach, your parent, your friend, or your community that made you a better person?

When you realize the power of quality people and their impact on others, it becomes critical that you can identify these people, recruit them, and retain them in your organization. Hiring teachers and coaches is one of my most important tasks at Norwalk High School. Content knowledge and a strong resume is a necessary foundation, but the eventual hire must also have character, integrity, and a passion to help others. Deciphering the latter is clearly the tougher assignment.

Fortunately, at Norwalk High School, there have been many good decisions made by quality people. Janet Conway and Skip Wilde served on the school board, and with many others, fought to build a new Norwalk High School in order to better serve our students. Teachers and coaches, who worked in the old building and in the new, continue to inspire our Truckers to this day.

Never underestimate the power of good people!