

A Teacher's Impact

by William McFadden

The eighth grade of my school year began September, 1949, when I met my teacher, Mr. Moore (Francis), who would become an important figure in the rest of my life. In a two-room Appalachian school in Businessburg, Ohio, it was unusual to have a teacher that had completed the requirements for a bachelor's degree and even more rare to discover the teacher would be a young man who had just graduated from Ohio State University. Mr. Moore took an interest in his handful of students in ways that no other teacher had previously done. He organized a softball team where we had never experienced any formal physical education. He arranged a softball game with another school, a first opportunity for competition.

When spring arrived he informed some parents that he would be willing to accompany some students on a visit to Washington D.C. On a Friday night, Mr. Moore alone, with a few anxious and excited elementary boys and girls, boarded a train in Wheeling, West Virginia for an overnight trip to the nation's capital, their first train ride. A fast, memorable and eye-opening day was spent seeing sites in the capital. An exhausted group with unforgettable memories boarded the train for another overnight ride home. I would never forget this teacher who was responsible for introducing me to such an experience and would introduce me to a much wider worldview.

As the year progressed and Mr. Moore knew I would be moving on to a large high school, he began to spend his lunch hour introducing me to algebra. This was commitment over and above his contract to prepare someone whose prior education would perhaps not place me on equal footing when I would encounter my peers.

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As I look back on that eighth grade year, I realize what it meant to encounter a person who went beyond the expected, who was not limited by the way things had always been done, who took risks, who cared, and who set an example of how one always has the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others.

Later, I learned that Francis Moore, upon graduation from Ohio State University, was put on a one-year wait list for admission to medical school. He had spent that year making a significant difference upon, at least, this eighth grader's life. In 2003 I was able to locate Dr. Moore, living in Columbus, Ohio, after a distinguished career as a medical doctor. With his permission, I went to Columbus to thank him for the impact he had upon my life. One person can make a difference and you can never give back enough for those who have made a difference in your life.